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ABSTRACT

This document examines the implementation and early effects of Minnesota's open-enrollment option, which allows families to apply to enroll their children in a public school in any nonresident school district in the state. During 1989-90, surveys were mailed to 2,663 participating families, 1,966 secondary school students, and all 432 district superintendents. Usable responses were received from 1,377 families, 645 students, and 338 superintendents. Findings indicate that very few of the participating districts reported significant changes in their enrollments. Also, the information dissemination strategies used most often by districts were not the most effective means of reaching minority families. Parents identified the school's academic reputation as the most important reason for using the open-enrollment option. However, minority parents also considered the availability of child care and extracurricular activities, while low-income families were concerned with school proximity. Overall, the initial impacts appear to be modest, but in a positive direction. Other trends include a slight migration of families from urban to suburban districts and from lower-income to higher-income districts, and ambiguities that exist between regulations for federal categorical programs and state interdistrict choice programs. Ten figures, 14 tables, and an executive summary are included. Appendices contain a description of the study methodology and copies of the surveys. (Contains 12 references.) (LMI)

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Minnesota's Open Enrollment Option

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School District Enrollment Options Program

This interdistrict enrollment option (authorized in 1987 by Minnesota Statutes 120.062, 123.3515, 124A.036) allows families and students to apply to enroll in any school district other than the one in which they reside. Implementation was gradual, beginning in school year 1987-88. As of school year 1990-91, all districts in the state are required to participate in the program.

Application to change districts under this program does not guarantee approval. School boards may declare their districts entirely closed to nonresident students if no space is available. Similarly, specific schools or grade levels within schools may be closed to nonresident applicants when they are operating at full capacity. However, no district may deter a resident student from leaving to attend school in another district, with the exception of three cities operating under desegregation guidelines.

Because of their desegregation plans, Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul are special cases within this program. Students and families seeking to leave the schools in these cities must obtain the approval of both resident and nonresident district. The resident district may deny approval if racial balance will be disturbed. Students in these districts may apply and enroll at any time during the year.

Postsecondary Enrollment Option Program (PSEO)

This option (authorized in 1985 by Minnesota Statute 123.3514, 135A.10) allows 11th and 12th graders attending public schools to enroll either full time or part time at an eligible postsecondary institution prior to high school graduation. The program was first implemented in 1985.

If the postsecondary courses are taken for credit toward high school graduation, tuition, fees, and required textbooks are provided at no cost to the student. After graduation, if students matriculate at the same postsecondary institution, the courses already taken are placed on their college transcript.

Another option allows high school students to take postsecondary courses directly for credit toward a postsecondary degree or certificate. In this case, students and their families are responsible for all costs incurred. Students may also request high school credit for these courses.

High School Graduation Incentives Program

This program (authorized in 1987 by Minnesota Statute 126.22 - 126.23) is designed to encourage certain groups of youth and adults to complete high school. Individuals qualify for the program if they are: (1) two more years below grade level on an achievement test; (2) one or more years behind in graduation credits; (3) pregnant or a parent; or (4) chemically dependent. The program was first implemented in 1987.

Eligible persons ages 12-21 may apply to attend: (1) any public high school; (2) a private alternative program under contract with a public school district; (3) an approved public alternative program; (4) an Area Learning Center; or (5) a postsecondary institution under the Postsecondary Enrollment Option Program. A similar set of options is available to qualifying adults over age 21, with a two-year limit on participation.

Area Learning Centers

The Area Learning Centers (authorized in 1987 by Minnesota Statute 129B.52 - 129B.56) are one of the options available to persons participating in the High School Graduation Incentives Program or the School District Enrollment Options Program. The program was first implemented in 1987. There are currently 40 designated ALCs operating 70 sites around the state. The Centers enroll both residents and nonresidents of the school district in which they are located.

The ALCs focus on both academics and preparation for work, including the transition to employment. Programs are individualized. Students may receive a diploma from their home district or the district where the Center is located.

[Continued on inside back cover]

Other Interdistrict Choice Options

In addition to the programs profiled, some students in Minnesota attend school in a nonresident district under one of the following state statutes:

- Nonresident student attendance agreements (agreements between school boards)
- Previous enrollment (e.g., when family's residence changes)
- State Board-approved exceptions
- Continued enrollment choice for 11th and 12th grade students
- Tuition agreements between district and parent (parent pays costs)

Within-District Choice

Minneapolis and St. Paul offer extensive within-district choice through magnet schools, specialty programs, and other mechanisms. St. Paul has 22 elementary magnet schools, 17 specialty programs serving students in grades 6-12, and one K-12 Open School. In Minneapolis, every elementary school adopts one of five instructional philosophies among which parents may choose. In addition, the city has 12 elementary and 14 secondary magnets. Indications are that some suburban and rural districts are also developing within-district options.

OVERVIEW OF INTERDISTRICT SCHOOL ENROLLMENT IN MINNESOTA

Numbers of K-12 Students Enrolled in a Nonresident District
Under Various Authorizing Mechanisms
(Data Collected By Minnesota Department of Education)

October, 1990

Mechanism	Number of Students Using
Family/Learner Choice Programs	
School District Enrollment Option (Open Enrollment)	5,940
Postsecondary Enrollment Option*	6,697
High School Graduation Incentives	2,397
Public alternative programs	2,193
Private alternative programs	1,036
Area Learning Centers (secondary only)[b]	11,810
	30,073
Percent of Total Enrollment:[a]	4%
District Agreements	
School board agreements	4,491
Previous enrollment (when family's residence changes)	103
State Board of Education-approved exceptions	22
Continued enrollment (grades 11 & 12)	567
	5,183
Percent of Total Enrollment:[a]	1%

*May 1991

[a] Total K-12 enrollment in Minnesota was 749,203 in October 1990.

[b] Total students served July 1, 1990 - June 30, 1991.

POLICY STUDIES ASSOCIATES, INC.
1718 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N. W. • SUITE 400 • WASHINGTON, D. C. 20009 • (202) 939-9780

MINNESOTA'S OPEN ENROLLMENT OPTION

Michael C. Rubenstein
Rosalind Hamar
Nancy E. Adelman

1992

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The study reported on in this volume was a joint undertaking of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) and the U.S. Department of Education (ED). Peggy Hunter served as MDE liaison and supervised the data collection effort, ably assisted by Mitchell White. MDE's Education Data Systems Division prepared the data sets. As subcontractor to the study, Westat, Incorporated provided assistance with the sampling plan and with the analyses of the data sets.

The study has benefited from the counsel of a panel of experts that includes:

Rolf Blank, Council of Chief State School Officers
Robert Boruch, University of Pennsylvania
James Coleman, University of Chicago
Josie Johnson, Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota
Michael O'Keefe, The McKnight Foundation, Minneapolis, MN
Carol Weiss, Harvard Graduate School of Education

This group formally approved the report before its publication. We thank them for their commitment to the study and their patience throughout the review process. Other outside reviewers included Joe Nathan of the Humphrey Institute, University of Minnesota and John Witte of the University of Wisconsin at Madison.

During the planning stage for the study, MDE convened a group of stakeholders who contributed a number of useful suggestions on policy issues and the design of survey instruments. This group included representatives from the state legislature, state agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, the Hubert Humphrey Institute, professional associations, and community-based organizations.

The authors wish to thank our colleagues on the study team. At one time or another, Nancy Adelman, Kelly Colopy, Janie Funkhouser, and Elizabeth Reisner all made important contributions to the work reported on here. Peggy Thompson and Nancy Swann prepared the manuscript.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parameters of the Study

This report examines the implementation and early effects of Minnesota's Open Enrollment option, which allows families to apply to enroll their children in a public school in any non-resident school district in the state. Approval of an application is contingent on (1) available space in the receiving school district and (2) racial balance considerations in cities with court-ordered desegregation plans.

The study was jointly supported by the U.S. Department of Education and the Minnesota Department of Education. Data presented summarize results obtained from mail surveys sent to participating families, participating secondary school students, and all school district superintendents during school year 1989-90, the first year in which a majority of the state's school districts participated in the Open Enrollment Program (either voluntarily or because they were required to do so). The state's relatively small number of urban districts (5) declined to respond to the survey; school district data are therefore only representative of Minnesota's rural and suburban areas.

In interpreting the findings of this study, readers are strongly cautioned to bear two things in mind:

- First, the study does not represent a full evaluation of educational choice in Minnesota. The Open Enrollment Program is only one of several mechanisms through which families and students may exercise educational choice in this state. An overview of the array of choice mechanisms available appears inside the front and back covers of this report.
- Second, these are (and were always intended to be) baseline data. Under no circumstances should they be used to draw firm conclusions about the overall or long-term impacts or effectiveness of an interdistrict choice program.

Introduction

The debate over the merits of public school choice has been waged nationally. A number of arguments have been put forward on both sides of the debate. For example, some supporters argue that the greatest benefit of allowing parents to choose a school for their children is the competition that this practice will inject into the education industry, encouraging schools to improve so that they can attract students. Others assert that its greatest benefit is the opportunity for students who do not succeed in one school to transfer to another school better suited to their needs. Opponents argue that public school choice will not breed healthy competition among schools because very few families actually take advantage of the opportunity to pick a school other than their neighborhood school. Moreover, they suggest that those who do take advantage of such an opportunity tend to be middle-class, well-educated, and better-informed families rather than families from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

To begin to inform this debate, the baseline data collected for this study address four major areas of concern to state and federal policymakers: (1) Who participates in Minnesota's Open Enrollment Program? (2) How do families learn about Open Enrollment? (3) Why do families choose to participate in Open Enrollment? (4) What initial outcomes or impacts are associated with the Open Enrollment Option? Technical information on the surveys is available in Appendix A.

Who Participates in Open Enrollment?

In 1989-90, all Minnesota school districts with total enrollments of over 1,000 were required to participate in the Open Enrollment Program and smaller districts were free to participate voluntarily. (Full participation by all districts became mandatory in 1990-91.) For school districts, "participation" means two things: (1) They may not prevent any student from leaving their district (unless racial balance will be disturbed), and (2) they may deny applications to enter their district only if space is unavailable (or racial balance will be affected).

In 1989-90, an overwhelming majority of Minnesota school districts (80 percent) allowed students to transfer into or out of their district, including two-thirds of those districts who were not required to participate. However, very few districts reported significant changes in their enrollments as a result of student transfers:

- Of the 345 participating districts, 297 (86 percent) actually had some students moving in or out under Open Enrollment.

- Forty-two percent of districts responding to the survey reported that no students entered under Open Enrollment, and 45 percent indicated that no students left.

- Fewer than 10 percent of participating districts reported a net gain or loss of more than 5 percent of their previous enrollment.

Fewer than one-half of one percent of all students in the state changed districts under the Open Enrollment option during school year 1989-1990:

- Omitting St. Paul and Minneapolis from an analysis of racial/ethnic group representation reveals that all groups are virtually proportionately represented among Open Enrollment participants.

- In St. Paul, where the total public school enrollment is 58 percent white, 85 percent of the 308 students using the Open Enrollment option to change districts were white. In Minneapolis, where district policy made it difficult for white families to leave, 57 percent of the 48 participating students were from minority backgrounds; the district's total minority enrollment is 52 percent.

Minority families' underrepresentation in St. Paul may be attributable either to their use of the substantial intradistrict choices available in the city or their lack of familiarity with the Open Enrollment option:

- Lower income families appear to be fairly well-represented among Open Enrollment participants. However, no firm conclusion can be drawn in this area until state data from the 1990 U.S. Census are released.

- In comparison with the overall geographic distribution of Minnesota's school population, rural families appear to be utilizing the option in somewhat disproportionately large numbers.

- Parents of students using the Open Enrollment option tend to be significantly better educated than the population at large.

How Do Families Learn About Open Enrollment?

Virtually all districts reported making some effort to inform parents about the options available to them under Open Enrollment:

- Ninety-five percent of all districts said that they provide information on Open Enrollment to all parents residing in their district. Ninety-two percent of superintendents responded that these dissemination efforts have not increased their district's budgets.
- Fifty-six percent of all districts made written information on the program available to all households primarily through school or district newsletters rather than districtwide mailings. Twenty percent gave printed information only to parents who requested it. Ten percent used the local media to disseminate information on Open Enrollment.

Overall, parents' actual sources of information on Open Enrollment varied, but certain patterns emerged:

- The news media, school principals, and friends or neighbors were the three most common and the three most important sources of information on Open Enrollment, according to parents.

However, survey data suggest, and subsequent interviews with minority families seem to confirm, that the dissemination strategies used most often by districts are not the most effective means of getting information to minority families, which might partially account for their low levels of participation in Open Enrollment:

- Minority families responding to the survey were far less likely to rely on school-based sources of information, such as school newsletters or principals, than on word-of-mouth sources, such as friends or relatives, for information on the program.
- Interviews with minority families in the Twin Cities revealed that they are largely unfamiliar with the program and that they get most of their information on schools from friends or relatives.

As Open Enrollment matures, the Minnesota Department of Education--with the advice and assistance of leaders and groups within the various communities--will need to continue to monitor the relative effectiveness of the strategies it employs to reach families who are less attuned to school-based sources of information.

Virtually all districts indicated adherence to a state policy that prohibits active advertising or recruitment of students outside of district boundaries. However, 24 percent of districts reported that they provided information on their schools to non-resident parents upon request.

One additional finding raises the possibility that district staff may pose barriers to families' use of the Open Enrollment option:

- Twenty-eight percent of all participating families reported that they felt pressured by staff from their resident district not to leave the district; families from rural areas were the most likely to encounter such pressure.

Why Do Families Decide to Use the Open Enrollment Option?

All parents and students in grades 7-12 were asked who first suggested that the child change schools and about the level of agreement between parents and children with regard to the transfer:

- While parents overwhelmingly initiated the idea of a transfer, most parents of older students did consult with and secure the consent of their children prior to applying for a transfer, according to both parents and secondary school students
- Only 3 percent of parents said they transferred their child against the child's wishes, while only one percent of students transferred without their parents' support.

Parents were also asked why they chose to transfer their child to a specific non-resident school. According to parents, academic considerations dominated their selection of a particular school, but the school's proximity to their home was also a major factor:

- When asked to indicate all of their reasons for using the Open Enrollment option, parents most commonly selected three responses related to the academic quality of the school--the learning climate at the school (65 percent), the educational services offered by the school (52 percent), and the academic reputation of the school (46 percent).

- However, when asked to identify the single most important reason for using the option, parents identified the school's academic reputation as the most important reason (11 percent), its proximity to the home and educational services were tied for second (9 percent), and its learning climate was fourth (8 percent).

Parents' reasons for using the Open Enrollment option differed in some respects according to their racial/ethnic backgrounds and their income:

- The largest blocks of minority and white parents agreed that the academic quality of a particular school was the most important reason for transferring to the school. However, more minority parents cited the availability of child care and extra-curricular activities at a school as their most important consideration, while more white parents pointed to the school's proximity to their job as the most important consideration.

- Lower-income families were more concerned with the school's proximity to their home than were higher-income families.

What Outcomes or Impacts Are Associated With the Open Enrollment Option?

In the first year of statewide implementation of the Open Enrollment option, participating parents and students reported improved educational experiences:

- Among responding parents, 95 percent said that their children's performance in and satisfaction with school had either improved or stayed the same.

- Among responding secondary school students, 95 percent are either satisfied or very satisfied with their new school; they indicated that they will stay at their new school.

- According to parents, at least 60 percent of participating students experienced improvements in their self-confidence, satisfaction with their education and motivation levels.

- The change cited most frequently by participating secondary school students was an increase in the number of friends they had compared with their old school. However, they indicated that the most important change was that they were learning more in their new schools.
- Parents were more likely to keep in touch with their children's teachers and attend school events at the new school, but less likely to be involved on parent advisory committees or to volunteer regularly compared with their involvement at the old school.

At least two-thirds of responding districts reported no impact on their budgets, administrative strategies, racial balance, or school programs. Of the districts that did report some impact in these areas, a majority indicated that Open Enrollment had a positive rather than a negative effect, except with regard to their budgets:

- Less than 10 percent of districts reported a significant change in their enrollment as a result of Open Enrollment.
- Ninety-seven percent of superintendents responded that Open Enrollment will not have any effect on the racial balance of their schools, reflecting the fact that very few Minnesota districts serve a significant number of minority students.
- At least 75 percent of responding districts reported no changes in teaching styles, instructional strategies, roles of school staff, student/teacher ratios, or school-level accountability as a result of Open Enrollment. District administrators do not predict future impacts in these areas.
- Forty-three percent of responding districts believe that Open Enrollment will ultimately increase competition for students among districts, while 31 percent believe that it will lead to increased cooperation among districts.[1]
- Twenty-two percent of all districts reported that they experienced a significant decrease in their budgets due to the large number of students who left their districts under Open Enrollment, while 14

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[1] The Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department (1991) found that Open Enrollment encouraged 20 percent of participating districts to initiate or expand cooperative efforts with other districts in order to enhance their curriculum and remain competitive with larger districts.

percent reported their budgets increased due to a substantial gain in enrollment.

Overall, the initial impacts of the Open Enrollment option in Minnesota appear to be modest, but in a positive direction. The program is being used by a very small proportion of the eligible families. Those who have participated in the option are very pleased with the results. For districts, the early effects appear to be minimal, and district administrators are divided on their expectations for future impacts as the program matures. Two trends emerging from these analyses of district and parent responses warrant further monitoring because of their potential for increasing financial or educational burdens on certain districts:

- Initial results from family surveys indicate a slight migration of families from urban districts into suburban districts and from lower-income districts into higher-income districts.
- Between 20 and 30 percent of responding districts indicated that students eligible for federal categorical programs (such as Chapter 1) or entitlement programs (such as the Individuals with Disabilities Act) entered their district under Open Enrollment. Funding mechanisms under the Open Enrollment statute are designed to allow receiving districts to recover the full costs of educating special education students. However, under current arrangements, categorical compensatory educational funds do not follow a child from district to district.

However, on balance, it is too early to judge whether the outcomes of Open Enrollment in this state will support the theories of either parental choice advocates or detractors with respect to its effect on school improvement and student achievement. For the limited number of families participating in the program in 1989-90, their reaction has been overwhelmingly favorable.

MINNESOTA'S OPEN ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

Introduction

In early 1989 the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) approached the U.S. Department of Education (ED) with a proposal to conduct a joint evaluation of Minnesota's Open Enrollment Program. ED agreed to work with MDE to conduct such a study because of widespread national interest in the effectiveness of school choice as a means of improving education. The jointly developed research agenda called for a three-year cooperative federal and state effort to determine the impact of two of Minnesota's school choice initiatives: the School District Enrollment Options Program (MN. Statute 123.3515) and the High School Graduation Incentives Program (MN. Statute 126.22). The two initiatives are reported on separately.

Scope of This Report

This report focuses on the School District Enrollment Options Program, hereafter referred to as the Open Enrollment Program, as it affected families, students, and districts during 1989-90. That year was the first year in which it became mandatory for all school districts with enrollments over 1,000 to allow parents to apply to transfer their children to other districts.[1] The findings reported in this document are based on mail surveys of all the state's school districts and of families who submitted applications to have their children change districts beginning in September 1989. These data were later supplemented by interviews with eight small groups of minority parents (African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans) brought together by community leaders. In 1990-91, study team members also contacted a small number of districts who had been more heavily affected by Open Enrollment transfers (i.e., had gained or lost 50 or more students or had gained or lost at least 5 percent of their student enrollment) to complement analyses of survey responses. Survey items and interviews probed four areas of interest to state and federal policy makers: (1) who took advantage of the Open Enrollment option; (2) how families learned about Open Enrollment; (3) how families decided to use the Open Enrollment option; and (4) the early impacts of Open Enrollment on families, students, and districts.

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[1] During 1987-88 and 1988-89, all districts had the option of letting students apply to transfer to other districts under Open Enrollment, but very few districts elected to do so.

The Open Enrollment Program is only one of several Minnesota initiatives that allow parents or children to choose a school that best suits their needs. Thus, this study is by no means intended to be an evaluation of "school choice" as it exists overall in Minnesota; such an evaluation would extend well beyond this study's mandate or available resources. Moreover, this report presents only baseline data for a comprehensive three-year evaluation of Open Enrollment. Data collection was limited to the 1989-90 school year, the first year that a majority of districts in the state either chose or were required to participate in the program; follow-up data collection activities will eventually allow us to draw more definitive conclusions about the program's impact on schools, parents, and students. Therefore, readers should not expand our conclusions beyond the limits imposed by the study design.

The Open Enrollment Program

In 1987 the Minnesota State Legislature enacted Open Enrollment legislation giving districts the option of allowing students entering kindergarten through grade 12 to apply to enroll in a district other than the one in which they resided. A total of 95 out of 433 school districts voluntarily participated in the program during its first year. The number grew to 153 in year two and 345 in year three[2] (districts were not required to participate until the third year, when Open Enrollment became mandatory for all districts with enrollments of 1,000 or more. Beginning in 1990-91, all districts in Minnesota were required to participate in the program).

The Open Enrollment legislation specifies two conditions under which districts may limit their participation in Open Enrollment:

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[2] Working Paper #1, Minnesota State Legislature - House Research Department, February 1990.

1. A district may declare itself closed by school board resolution, thereby preventing all non-resident students from entering. Districts may not, however, restrict students from leaving the district.

2. A district may accept a limited number of non-resident students. Students may only be rejected if districts/schools determine that the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building is limited. They may not reject students on the basis of academic achievement, athletic or other extra-curricular interest, handicapping condition, proficiency in the English language, or previous disciplinary proceedings.

To participate in the Open Enrollment Program, families must file an application before January 1 of a given year in order to enroll a child in a new district the following September, although districts may agree to waive this deadline and accept applications to enter their district at any time of the year. Districts with State-Board-of-Education-approved desegregation plans (Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth) are considered special cases and may limit transfers into and out of their districts to ensure compliance with their desegregation plans. Residents in these districts are also allowed to apply to change districts under Open Enrollment at any time during the year.

Context of School Choice in Minnesota

Although this report focuses on the Open Enrollment Program, it is important to understand the context within which the program operates. Public school choice has a long history in Minnesota, beginning with the development of alternative and magnet schools in the Twin Cities starting in the early 1970s and culminating with the passage of Open Enrollment legislation in 1987. For nearly 20 years, some parents and students in St. Paul and Minneapolis have not been confined by school attendance areas, but have been able to choose from among a wide array of schools located throughout their respective cities.

Moreover, several other initiatives that were passed by the legislature just prior to or together with Open Enrollment, have expanded the educational options available to parents and students throughout the state. A brief description of each of these initiatives is provided on the inside front and back covers of this report, and additional information on the development and operation of intradistrict choice (choice of schools within a district as opposed to across district lines) in the Twin Cities is provided below.

Intradistrict Choice in St. Paul

St. Paul's first alternative public school, the St. Paul Open School, opened in 1971 and gave rise to a growing number of magnet and specialty schools in the city. Today, approximately half of St. Paul's 19,000 elementary school students attend one of 22 magnet schools. The remainder of the population attends neighborhood schools. For the 1991-92 school year, the district received over 2,800 applications for magnet programs. About 70 percent of the applicants received their first, second, or third choice.

At the secondary school level (junior and senior high), St. Paul has 17 specialty programs available to students in grades 6-12. In addition, the St. Paul Open School continues to serve students in grades K-12.

Achieving racial balance is the primary goal of the St. Paul magnet schools and the primary consideration for acceptance into a particular program. Although the magnet and specialty programs are open to students citywide, first preference (within racial balance guidelines) is given to students who live in the program's attendance area. Racial balance is achieved through the choice parents make or a random selection process is used to achieve the racial balance goals.

In St. Paul, the application deadline for students in grades 1-12 is in early April, about one month after a magnet brochure (tabloid format) is mailed to all families. Magnet programs hold open houses for parents and students throughout the month of March. Kindergarten round-up, with its own set of open houses, occurs in May.

Themes of the elementary magnet programs in St. Paul include Spanish immersion, the environment, communications, music, technology, humanities, creative arts, and science/math. In addition, there is a Montessori program, a fundamental school, a program based on Howard Gardner's ways of knowing, a school with a problem solving emphasis, and others. The Eastside Workplace Kindergarten and the Downtown Kindergarten, co-sponsored by the school district, Community Education, and business firms offer school sites close to parents' work for 4- and 5-year-olds with preference given to employees of the business partners; families pay a monthly fee for the full-day program. Many of the magnet programs offer before and after school arrangements (Discovery Clubs) from very early in the morning to as late as 6:00 p.m.

Secondary level specialty programs are organized around different grade configurations--7-8, 7-12, 9-12. Themes include business/math/science, Chinese language, business and marketing management, international studies, performing arts, media and communications, creative arts, and technology. In addition, there are gifted and talented programs and an International Baccalaureate program.

Intradistrict Choice in Minneapolis

Theoretically, every family in Minneapolis chooses the elementary school that their child will attend. However, the city has a court-ordered desegregation plan, and assignment of families to schools must always take racial balance into account. For school year 1991-92, the district approved 63 percent of the almost 3,000 applications from families with children in grades 1-8.

At the early childhood, elementary, and middle school levels, the district has created a complex array of educational options that are explained in a 90-page pamphlet distributed to all families. The district has three geographically-based subdivisions. Within these subdivisions, each elementary school is identified with one of the following five categories, representing different philosophies and approaches to curriculum and instruction:

> **Contemporary Schools**--21 schools. Based on where they live, parents select a contemporary school lying within one of the system's three subdistricts. Contemporary Schools are traditional schools with students assigned to a classroom by grade level.
>
> **Continuous Progress Schools**--8 schools. School assignment is by address. Children are placed in multi-age groupings and progress at their own rate. Special features vary by school.
>
> **Fundamental Schools**--3 schools. These schools emphasize discipline, structure, and parent involvement. There is one Fundamental School in each of the three subdistricts.
>
> **Open Schools**--6 schools. The Open Schools promote a child-centered approach to education, emphasizing student-initiated learning, a "family" structure (e.g., multi-age groupings, having the same teacher for several years), continuous progress, and individual needs.
>
> **Montessori**--2 schools. Children are placed in the Montessori program closest to their residence. Curriculum and instruction are based on the theories, practices, and materials developed by Maria Montessori.

In addition to these five school types, Minneapolis supports 12 elementary-level magnet programs. Themes include Urban Environmental, Math/Science/Technology, International/Fine Arts, an American Indian Program, an American Indian and French Immersion Program, a Spanish Immersion Program, and a Public School Academy. Four Early Education Centers serve some 4-1/2 to 7 year-olds.

The district operates six attendance zone middle schools serving grades 6-8. Some of these have special programs such as a pre-International Baccalaureate program, Math/Science/Technology, or an environmental science theme. A seventh middle school serves grades 5-8 and draws its enrollment from all parts of the city. This school, which is considered experimental, has a unique curriculum designed to help students learn about their city.

At the high school level, the city has seven zoned comprehensive high schools. Each high school has at least one magnet program associated with it. There are a total of 14 secondary-level magnet programs.

Since the early 1980s, Minnesota state statutes have provided various mechanisms whereby students may attend school in a non-resident district at the discretion of the resident district. At first, these statutes generally permitted inter-district transfers on the basis of negotiated agreements between districts and case-by-case consideration of student transfers. They also specified procedures for compensation of the nonresident district, either through state funding or district/parent-paid tuition. Most of these early transfer agreements, including those most commonly utilized--tuition arrangements and nonresident-student attendance agreements--are still in use.

The data from this study suggest (and MDE staff confirm) that many districts may not keep clear records on precisely which mechanism is actually governing the enrollment of their entering nonresident students.

In 1985, Minnesota's governor submitted a choice package to the legislature that included Open Enrollment and the Postsecondary Enrollment Option (PSEO, described on the inside front cover).[3] The legislature passed PSEO but defeated Open Enrollment in committee after an acrimonious debate. To cool the controversy, Governor Perpich appointed a Governor's Discussion Group, with members from constituencies that both supported and opposed the initiative. By the 1987 legislative session, this group had largely resolved its differences and recommended the implementation of a voluntary K-12 Open Enrollment Program and alternative educational programs designed to give unsuccessful students "a second chance" to complete their education. Both of these measures were subsequently passed by the legislature--the latter in the form of the High School Graduation Incentives program (HSGI) described on the inside front cover--with far less dispute.

Passage of the new choice legislation in 1987 began an incremental four-year process that culminated in the extension of parent-initiated school choice across the state (where previously it had been available on a limited basis at the discretion of each district). In 1987-88 and 1988-89, districts could volunteer to let their students apply to transfer to non-resident districts under Open Enrollment, but very few allowed this action. The following year, lawmakers passed new legislation making participation in Open Enrollment mandatory for districts with enrollments larger than 1,000 students in school year 1989-90 and mandatory for all districts beginning in 1990-91. Like most of the earlier nonresident transfer initiatives, Open Enrollment specifies that state financial aid automatically follows those students who enroll in another district.

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[3] The following history of the development and passage of Open Enrollment legislation in Minnesota is drawn from: Mazzoni, T. L. (Summer 1986), State policy making and public school choice in Minnesota: From confrontation to compromise. Peabody Journal of Education pp. 45-67.

In evaluating the impact of Minnesota's Open Enrollment Program, it is useful to understand the issues that the Governors' Discussion Group had to resolve. The pros and cons that they debated mirrored the dialectic about educational choice that has been highlighted in the professional and popular press nationally. Some of those who advocated the initiative believed that it would offer "the single best instrument for revitalizing K-12 education" (Mazzoni, pp. 54-55). Choice would stimulate competition and motivate schools and districts to pursue productive reforms and enhance their offerings. Other supporters believed that it would create programs that were more responsive to student needs and would increase parent participation and loyalty. Some also argued that a state choice initiative would improve educational equity by extending to poorer families an option which already existed for families who could afford to move to better districts or send their children to private schools. In contrast, those who opposed the measure argued that the impact on school reform was at best untested and would probably prove minimal. They believed that as students took advantage of the opportunity to move, receiving schools would flourish, while those losing students would suffer from a loss of financial resources as well as declines in student and staff morale. They also disagreed with the equity argument, suggesting that choice would primarily benefit families in urban areas like Minneapolis and St. Paul (where choice was already available) and those who could afford to take advantage of it. They reasoned that families in rural areas would not benefit due to the isolation of rural districts from one another and a lack of real educational options.[4]

This study is designed to shed light on some of these conflicting concerns as Open Enrollment moves toward full implementation. The questions in the surveys appended to the report were intended to establish a baseline of expectations among district administrators and among the families and secondary school students who utilized this choice option in 1989-90. The overall design of the study calls for follow-up data collection in school year 1991-92. The intention is to compare the data presented here with later observations about the program's impact.

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[4] Op. cit., Mazzoni, pp. 54-55

The remainder of this report is organized around four central questions regarding implementation of the Open Enrollment Program: (1) Who participates in Open Enrollment? (2) How do families learn about the Open Enrollment option? (3) Why do parents decide to use the Open Enrollment option?, and (4) What outcomes or impacts are associated with the Open Enrollment option?

Question 1: Who Participates in Open Enrollment?

The Open Enrollment Program puts the initiative for changing districts and schools in the hands of mothers and fathers. Parents must file a state-developed application with the chosen district and comply with deadlines involving application, approval, and commitment to follow through with the move. From the fall of 1989 through the spring of 1991, participating families were required to reapply each year in order to maintain their children's enrollment status in a nonresident district. However, beginning in the fall of 1991, the state policy changed to a one-time application process. Unless a family wishes to enroll a child in a different district in subsequent years, no annual reapplication is required.

The families surveyed for this study are those that submitted an application to have a child or children change school districts in school year 1989-90. Many families submitted separate applications, as required, for two or more children; districts forwarded to MDE approximately 3,700 approved applications for 1989-90. Mailing lists for the family survey were compiled from these applications, and surveys were sent to 2,663 families. Of the 1,770 families with accepted applications who responded to the survey, 393 (22 percent) indicated that they had ultimately changed their minds and kept their children in the district where they reside. Technical information on the sample can be found in Appendix A.

The data base does not include families who applied to move their children under the Open Enrollment legislation but had their applications rejected by the district of choice. MDE does not require school districts to submit rejected applications. However, only 8 percent of school districts responding to MDE's district survey indicated that they had rejected student applications. Reasons for rejection cited by these districts included lack of space, desegregation restrictions, and lack of personnel.

Participating Families

Minnesota's population has traditionally been predominantly white, middle class, and relatively well-educated. In 1988-89, 91 percent of the state's public school enrollment was white (Minnesota Department of Education); in recent history, its median family income has been in the top third of the fifty states (Statistical Abstract of the U.S., 1987); Minnesota's high school graduation rate of 90 percent is the highest in the country (Compare Minnesota, 1990). Participants in the Open Enrollment program (i.e., families whose applications were approved by the non-resident district) reflect the composition of the broader public school population, on some of these demographic variables but on others they do not.

Ethnicity. The demographics of the school population in Minneapolis and St. Paul are vastly different from the rest of Minnesota (as shown in the tables below) and thus merit separate consideration. Moreover, Minneapolis' decision to restrict student transfers into and out of the district to maintain the racial balance in its schools most likely had an impact on the racial composition of the students allowed to leave the city under Open Enrollment. In effect, this policy limited the number of white students allowed to leave the district. St. Paul did not restrict any students from transferring into or out of the district. Table 1 below compares the racial

TABLE 1

Comparisons of Public School Enrollments and Participation in Open Enrollment (Percents by race)

Greater Minnesota (excluding Minneapolis & St. Paul)

	Public School Enrollment (n=663,964)	Open Enrollment Participants (n=3,528)	Survey Respondents (n=1,238)
Whites	95.0%	93.9%	97.5%
Blacks	1.0	0.8	0.4
Hispanics	1.0	0.5	0.2
Asians	2.0	1.2	0.7
Native Americans	1.0	1.5	1.1
Other	--	2.1[1]	--

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[1] Neither the Standard Minnesota Department of Education data on enrollments, nor the family survey included an "Other" option for reporting families' ethnicity; the Minnesota House Research Study did include "Other."

Table 1 (continued)

Minneapolis

	Public School Enrollment (n=40,831)	Open Enrollment Participants (n=48)	Survey Respondents (n=12)
Whites	50.0%	43.8%	75.0%
Blacks	31.0	20.8	16.7
Hispanics	2.0	14.6	0
Asians	10.0	12.5	0
Native Americans	7.0	8.3	8.3

St. Paul

	Public School Enrollment (n=34,758)	Open Enrollment Participants (n=308)	Survey Respondents (n=86)
Whites	58.0%	84.7%	93.0%
Blacks	16.0	2.6	0
Hispanics	6.0	6.2	4.7
Asians	19.0	2.9	1.2
Native Americans	2.0	2.6	1.2

composition of the entire student populations of St. Paul, Minneapolis, and greater Minnesota with the racial composition of resident students with approved applications to transfer to non-resident schools.

In greater Minnesota, all racial/ethnic groups were virtually proportionately represented in the program. Not surprisingly however, whites from Minneapolis were underrepresented and most minorities, except African-Americans, were overrepresented in the Open Enrollment program because of the district's enforcement of its desegregation policy. On the other hand, in St. Paul, where the district permitted free movement into and out of the district regardless of race, whites were substantially overrepresented in the Open Enrollment program.

Minnesota's minority communities are largely concentrated in its urban areas, particularly Minneapolis and St. Paul, where the range of intradistrict educational choices are quite extensive (see pgs. 4-5). Minority families in St. Paul may have been less inclined to use the statewide interdistrict choice option because they do have options without crossing district borders. However, group interviews with parents representing several racial/ethnic minority groups revealed that most were not familiar with the state's Open Enrollment option; those who were familiar with it tended to view the need to arrange for transportation across district lines as a major barrier to their exercise of cross-district choice.

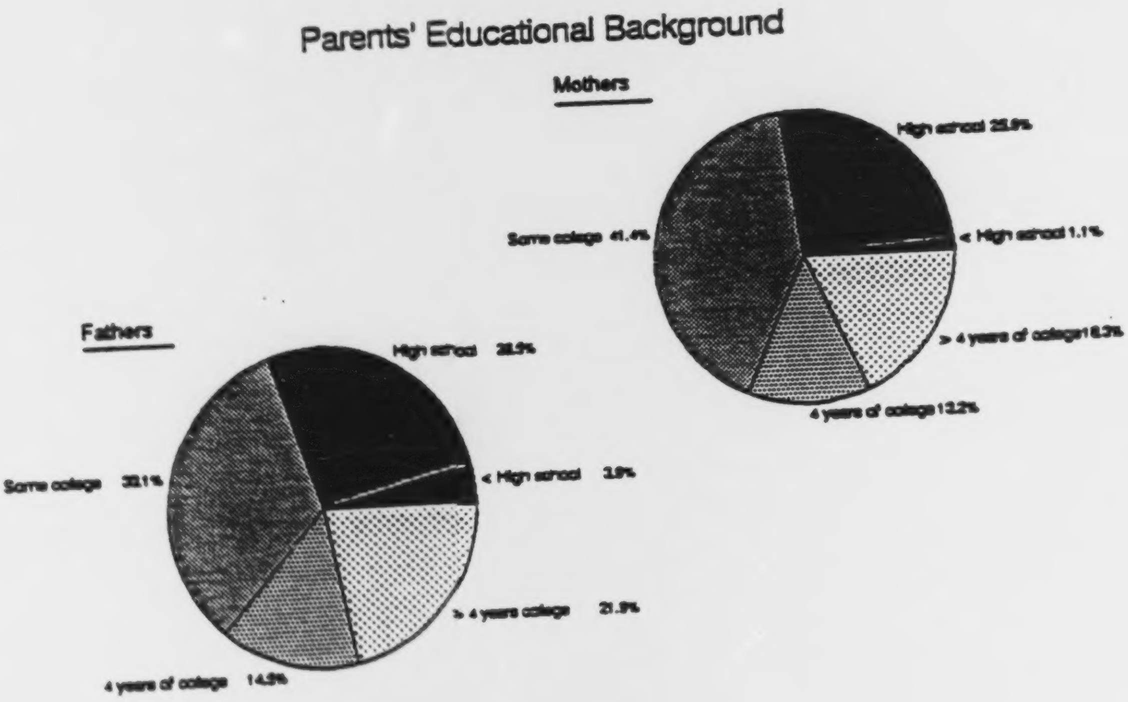
With regard to the survey data cited throughout the remainder of this report, white respondents are slightly overrepresented, and minority respondents are somewhat underrepresented. Overall, exactly one-third (44 out of 131) of the minority families participating in Open Enrollment during 1989-90 responded to the survey. This small number of minority respondents renders their responses less reliable than other data presented in this report.

Income. MDE's survey collected data on the income of participating families in an effort to gauge the use of Open Enrollment by lower- and higher-income families. However, in the absence of 1990 United States census data, which has not yet been analyzed at the state level, we can not compare our data against a reliable measure of Minnesota's median family income. Two attempts to estimate the state's median family income proved unsuccessful. The first method involved comparing the previous relationships between Minnesota's median family income and the national median family income, and then estimating the current Minnesota figure based on the current national figure. The second method began with the 1980 state median family income as a base and estimated the current figure using the rate of growth of national family income since 1980. The two methods yielded relatively different figures between $30,000 and $40,000, with no way to determine which is closest to the actual 1989 median family income. Further, the Minnesota State Demographer's office believes that neither method can yield valid results.

Thus, we can only report that 35 percent of participating families reported incomes below $30,000, 25 percent reported incomes between $30,000 and $40,000, and 39 percent reported incomes above $40,000. While we can make no definitive statement given the nature of our data, it appears that lower-income families are fairly well-represented among those using the Open Enrollment program. Throughout the remainder of this report, we will use the term "lower-income families" to refer to families earning less than $30,000 and "higher-income families" for those earning more than $30,000.

Parents' education. Generally speaking, education levels are high in Minnesota. According to 1980 Census data (the most recent data available), 73 percent of Minnesota's adult population were high school graduates and 17.4 percent had completed four or more years of college. Comparable data for adults

FIGURE 1



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between the ages of 25 and 50, those most likely to have school-age children, are likely higher, although exact figures for the state are not available.[2]

As Figure 1 illustrates, mothers and fathers in families utilizing Open Enrollment are far more highly educated than the state norms. Among the responding families, 96 percent of fathers and 99 percent of mothers reported that they are high school graduates. Thirty-six percent of fathers and 32 percent of mothers have completed four or more years of college.

Family residence. According to the QED educational data base, 14 percent of Minnesota's school population resides in urban areas, 49 percent resides in suburban areas, and 37 percent come from rural areas. By comparison, of the families using the Open Enrollment option, 12 percent reside in urban areas, 34 percent reside in suburban areas, and 54 percent come from rural areas, as shown in Table 2. Thus, rural families are significantly overrepresented among participants in the program, and urban and suburban families are underrepresented. The Minnesota House Research Department's report (1990) suggests that the overrepresentation of rural families can be attributed in large part to the exodus of a large number of families from one rural district.

TABLE 2

Comparison of Family Residence of
Open Enrollment Families With Total Minnesota School Population
(Percent by urbanicity)

	Minnesota School Population (n=724,315)	Participating Families (n=2,637)	Survey Respondents (n=1,346)
Urban	14%	12%	12%
Suburban	49	46	34
Rural	37	42	54

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[2] At the national level in 1988, 76 percent of the adult population had graduated from high school, while 85 percent of those between the ages of 25 and 50 were high school graduates; 20 percent of the adult population had 4 or more years of college, while 25 percent of those between the ages of 25 and 50 had 4 or more years of college.

These data suggest that, at least in its first year of mandatory implementation, the Open Enrollment program appealed to a group of families largely representative of all Minnesota families with children enrolled in public schools, with some exceptions. Well-educated, higher-income families appear to be overrepresented, while some racial minorities in urban areas were underrepresented. Families in rural, isolated areas of the state were also overrepresented. We suggest that it is far too early to draw any definitive conclusions from these data, as they represent only the first year of mandatory implementation in the state. They will serve as a basis for comparison and analysis of future trends and developments in families' use of the Open Enrollment option as participation in the program becomes mandatory for all districts.

Participation of private school students. Choice advocates have predicted that Open Enrollment may pull students attending private schools back into the public sector. Advocates of choice have argued that even parents who can afford private schools would send their children to public schools if they were allowed to choose a high quality public school for their child. In this regard, family survey data suggest a trend that may, over time, support this prediction. Just over 10 percent of the responding families using the Open Enrollment option had previously enrolled their child or children in a private school. However, these 124 students represent fewer than 1 percent of Minnesota's 88,966 students enrolled in private schools (Digest of Educational Statistics, 1989). Our data do not allow us to speculate how many of these 124 students would have left private school to enroll in a public school had Open Enrollment not existed. Ninety-six percent of these 124 students were white, half came from rural areas, and 76 percent came from higher-income families.

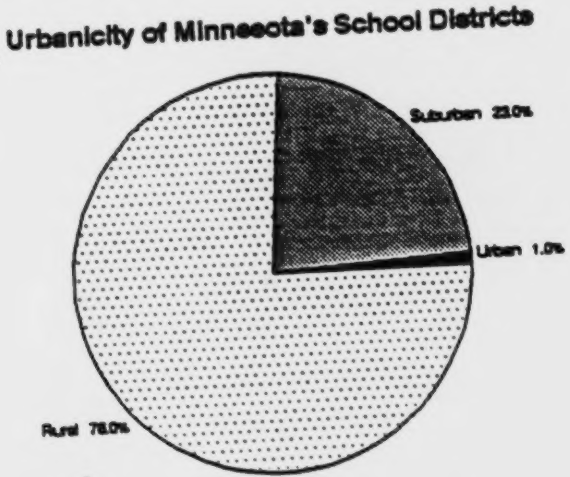
School Districts Participating in the Open Enrollment Program

Parents choosing to transfer their children to another district under the Open Enrollment legislation can theoretically select from over 400 districts. This section first places the districts responding to an MDE survey in the context of the state's districts before closely examining the districts that actually experienced movement of students--entering, leaving, or both.

Context. In March 1990, MDE mailed a District Survey to all of the 432 Minnesota school districts serving students during the 1989-90 school year. A total of 338 districts (78 percent) responded. Response rates were lower than anticipated, due in part to the fact that the Minnesota House Research Department had fielded its own survey approximately five months previously.[3] Most notably, only one of the five urban districts responded to MDE's survey. Therefore, the analyses in this report are only representative of the experiences of suburban and rural districts with Open Enrollment.

Characteristics of all Minnesota school districts. Figure 2 shows the distribution of all Minnesota school districts by urbanicity. As used here, urbanicity is defined by proximity to a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA). Urban districts are those located in central city areas with a population of 50,000 or more. Suburban districts are those in areas surrounding the central city that are part of the greater SMSA. Rural districts are those outside of SMSAs. As Figure 2 clearly illustrates, Minnesota is predominantly a rural state; approximately 76 percent of its districts are in rural areas and serve fewer than 2,000 students. However, 48 percent of the state's student population live in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area.

FIGURE 2



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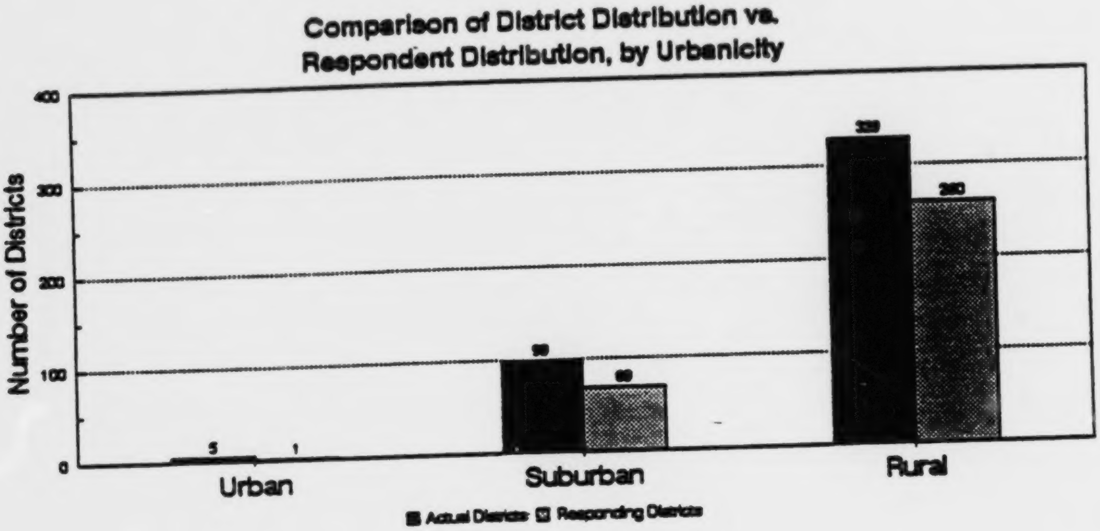
[3] House Research was able to conduct telephone surveys with all Minnesota districts that did not return their written survey, and thus developed a more complete picture of the numbers of students entering and leaving each district through the Open Enrollment option. In some instances, this report cites the House Research data as the most reliable source of information on the number of students participating in Open Enrollment. On these occasions, the source of the data is always acknowledged.

Figure 3 compares the urbanicity of responding districts with that of the state overall. Survey data represent the responses of 70 percent of all suburban and 79 percent of all rural districts. As noted earlier, this data base cannot be used to represent the experiences of urban districts with the Open Enrollment option.

FIGURE 3



Some analyses in this report are based on the proportion of enrolled students from families with incomes that fall below the poverty line. The statistic used to differentiate among districts for these analyses is the Orshansky measure, a standard poverty indicator used by the Census Bureau and others. The Orshansky percentile assigned to each school district estimates the proportion of families with school-aged children who meet government definitions of poverty.

The range of 1980 Orshansky percentiles among the state's school districts has been divided into quartiles for the purpose of analysis. The first quartile represents districts with the lowest proportions of poor students and the fourth quartile represents districts with the highest proportions of poor children. For the remainder of this report, districts in the first and second quartiles will be called "higher-income districts" and districts in the third and fourth quartiles will be called "lower-income districts." The reader should bear in mind, however, that these terms refer to average family income in the districts, not to the districts' budgets. The response rate to MDE's survey was 10 percent greater in the lowest-income districts (fourth quartile) than the highest-income (first quartile) districts.[4]

Reliability of school-district data on participation in the Open Enrollment program. Accuracy of reporting may be linked to kinds of data maintained by school districts and the form in which they are kept. The MDE survey asked districts about the records they and their schools maintain for students entering and leaving their district under Open Enrollment and other mechanisms facilitating student transfer.

Approximately one-third of responding districts indicated that they did not keep records, by program or mechanism, for students seeking to leave or enter their district. Furthermore, 60 percent of district administrators indicated that their schools did not keep program-by-program lists of students entering and leaving.[5] Only about 10 percent of districts keep options transfer records on computer. This suggests that district-reported data on the numbers of students entering and leaving under particular auspices may not be entirely reliable. This problem is likely compounded by the previously cited speculation that in 1989-90, some districts tended to view Open Enrollment and an array of other student attendance statutes as indistinguishable.

Actual district participation in Open Enrollment. In 1989-90, a total of 269 districts (approximately two-thirds of all Minnesota districts) were not required to participate in Open Enrollment because they enrolled fewer than 1,000 students. According to House Research, 88 (about one-third) of these districts, serving 4 percent of the state's enrollment, chose not to participate. Nonparticipating districts are generally scattered across the state although there are two clusters of 11 or more nonparticipating districts in both the northwest and southwest corners of the state. Of districts responding to the MDE survey, 220 reported enrollments of under 1,000 students and 66 (30 percent) of those districts did not participate in Open Enrollment.

According to the Minnesota House Research Department, 345 school districts, or 80 percent of the state's districts, participated in the Open Enrollment option

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[4] First quartile - 71 percent, second quartile - 76 percent, third quartile - 79 percent, and fourth quartile - 81 percent.

[5] Approximately 21 percent indicated they did not keep any records, and another 14 percent indicated that this type of recordkeeping was not applicable to their district.

(with participation defined as those districts that were open to participation, whether or not students actually moved in or out under the Open Enrollment statute). These districts serve 96 percent of all K-12 students in the state. House Research further reported that 13 of the 164 districts required to participate and 35 of the 269 districts voluntarily participating had no students moving into or out of their district. It is clear that Open Enrollment is widely used across the state, even among those districts not required to participate.

Question 2: How Do Families Learn About Open Enrollment?

In order to realize its potential as a means of expanding the schooling options available to parents, information about Open Enrollment must reach the greatest number of parents possible. To accomplish this objective, special efforts must be made to inform parents who do not normally come into contact with the school for various reasons, perhaps because they work and are single parents, do not speak English, or are generally distrustful in the parent/school relationship. MDE and individual school districts have used a variety of methods to publicize the available options. In this section, we first discuss the dissemination strategies that school districts report that they used to inform families of their education options. We then explore the ways in which participating families learned about the Open Enrollment program.

School District Dissemination of Information on Open Enrollment

By state statute, Minnesota school districts are "responsible for informing students" about options programs. MDE has expanded this to require that districts provide information about the Open Enrollment Program to their communities. To assist this process, MDE prepared and disseminated to districts a model press release and printed descriptions of the Open Enrollment Program as well as the High School Graduation Incentives Program and several others. The press release instructed districts to add the name and telephone number of the staff person they had designated to answer questions about the programs.

In the MDE District Survey, 95 percent of districts indicated that they provided options information to all resident parents and students. However, there was no way to monitor compliance with this requirement and districts could respond in any number of ways, some far less effective than others. For example, it is likely that some districts photocopied the MDE information and made it available to students and parents by placing it on the counter in district or school offices. Other districts may have taken a much more aggressive approach to assure that the information reached parents within their boundaries. District survey data indicate that printed information was provided to every household by 56 percent of districts and only to those families requesting it by 20 percent of districts.

The most frequently used means of conveying printed information was through district newsletters (used by 52 percent of responding districts). The second most commonly used means of dissemination was through school newsletters (used by 47 percent of responding districts). Other means of communication that would have drawn more direct attention to open enrollment--such as student-carried or mailed brochures, school newspapers, and informational meetings--were used by fewer than 20 percent of districts. Only 10 percent of districts reported having used local media to disseminate information about Open Enrollment (see Table 3).

TABLE 3

School District Strategies for Disseminating Information
on Open Enrollment
(Percent of responding districts)

Dissemination Strategy	Percent of Districts Using Strategy* (n-338)
District newsletter	52%
School newsletter to families	47
Student-carried brochures	18
School newspapers	15
School-sponsored information meetings	12
Mailed brochures/fliers	12
Local newspaper, radio, TV	10

*Numbers do not add to 100 because some districts use more than one method of distribution.

By state statute, districts are not permitted to "compete with one another for the enrollment of students." Therefore, although they may not recruit students from outside their own boundaries, they are allowed to respond to inquiries from nonresident families. This study found that only 4 percent of districts acknowledged distributing unsolicited printed information to households in other districts. However, MDE has received some complaints in this area from districts, accusing neighboring districts of recruiting students. In some cases it is difficult to separate publicizing from recruiting. Dilemmas MDE has faced include, for example, cases where one district promotes its programs in a regional newspaper that is the only paper serving a multi-district area or instances where a district "advertises" its programs on a local radio station with an audience that extends well beyond the boundaries of a single district. If more districts become active in seeking students under Open Enrollment, these practices may increase. At present, the Department deals with incidents on a case-by-case basis, considering the content and the apparent intent of the advertising.

While 69 percent of the districts responding to the survey cited MDE as their primary source of disseminated information, 26 percent reported preparing their own information. In general, district responses to questions about consumer information indicated that at least half took some active steps to get the information into the community. In terms of the content of the information disseminated, districts were most likely to distribute information on all of the options programs (70 percent) and on the application process (64 percent). They were less likely to provide information on program eligibility (48 percent) and the actual application forms (31 percent).

Most districts (77 percent) indicated that they provided consultation and advice on programs within their own districts, while only 24 percent offered this service regarding programs in other districts. Although MDE instructed districts to assign staff to answer questions about the various choice options, including Open Enrollment, and to publicize the names and phone numbers of appropriate contact people, fewer than half (46 percent) of all districts reported having taken this step. Twenty-nine percent reported offering strategies to assist students in gaining acceptance to the school of their choice. Ten percent of districts reported offering no special assistance related to Open Enrollment and other option programs.

A concern that disseminating information would result in significant costs has so far proven largely unfounded. Only 8 percent of districts reported that the options programs, including Open Enrollment, had resulted in significant increases of any kind to the district budget.

Families' Use of Information on Open Enrollment

The success of publicity strategies can only be assessed in the context of actual consumer use. As a means of rating the success of the wide range of dissemination strategies and to assist MDE and the districts with future efforts to inform parents, the survey asked parents to list each of their sources of information about the Open Enrollment program and then to indicate the most valuable source. Figures 6 and 7 show parents' sources of information by their race or ethnicity.

All parents. For the responding parents overall, the source of information most frequently cited was the news media (61 percent). School principals came second at 48 percent and friends or neighbors third at 29 percent. The media, principals, and friends or neighbors, respectively, were also the three most valuable sources, according to parents.

While approximately half of the districts in the state used either district or school newsletters to distribute information on Open Enrollment, only 21 percent of participating families reported reading these newsletters. Other largely unused sources were brochures published by MDE or the districts, cited by 13 percent of participating families, and school-sponsored informational meetings, attended by only 8 percent of participating parents.

MDE's toll-free Options Information Hotline was used by only 1 percent of the respondents. However, MDE staff report that they have received several thousand phone calls asking for information; the difference between the reported heavy volume of calls and the Hotline's relative insignificance to survey respondents could be attributed to at least three factors: (1) Many families used the Hotline to obtain information on Open Enrollment but ultimately chose not to use the program and thus were not surveyed; (2) Families use the Hotline to obtain information on school choice programs other than Open Enrollment; or (3) Families who called MDE for information either did not use the Hotline or did not realize that it was a toll-free call. Community-based agencies and social workers were apparently not involved or were ineffective in disseminating information about Open Enrollment, since only 1 percent of participating families cited each of these as sources.

Comparisons of white and minority families. The effectiveness of particular dissemination strategies appears to vary by race and ethnicity of the information users. Analyses show that minority parents relied less on school-based sources of information--such as principals, teachers, and school newsletters--and more on word-of-mouth sources such as friends and relatives. Since the results of the district survey demonstrate that schools relied almost exclusively on newsletters, brochures, and school-sponsored informational meetings to inform parents, minority families may be poorly informed about the options available to them, and hence less likely to take advantage of them.

Figure 4 shows that minority parents were half as likely as white parents to list principals as a source at all, and one-third as likely to name teachers and school newsletters as a source. While white parents cited principals as their most valuable source, minority parents cited the media as the most important, friends or neighbors second, and principals tied for a distant third with relatives and employers (Figure 5). Minority parents are one-third as likely than white parents to list school-based sources (principals, teachers, counselors, and school newsletters) as the most valuable sources (9 percent vs. 31 percent). Conversely, they are more than twice as likely as white parents to name community-based sources of information (relatives, friends, neighbors, and employers) as the most valuable sources of information about Open Enrollment (22 percent vs. 10 percent). However, the news media appear to have been the most effective way of informing minority families.

MDE is aware of the need for developing alternative dissemination strategies in order to reach Minnesota's minority populations and has taken steps in that direction. For example, in 1988 the Commissioner of Education established an advisory committee on this topic. MDE created press releases and public service announcements specifically targeting newspapers and radio stations that reach the various minority communities (The state's model dissemination flyer was translated into Spanish but has not been available in Asian languages). Steps have also been taken to work through minority advocacy groups and other state agencies to spread the word about the educational options. As Open Enrollment matures, MDE--with the advice and assistance of leaders and groups within the various communities--will need to

FIGURE 4

Sources of Information on Open Enrollment, by Race

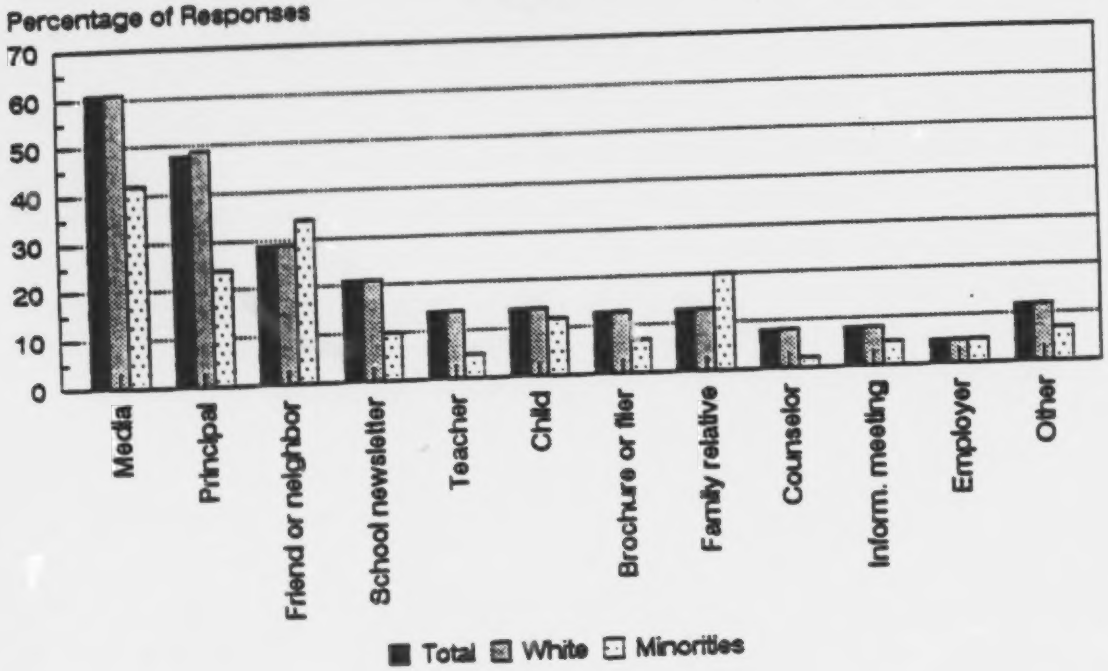
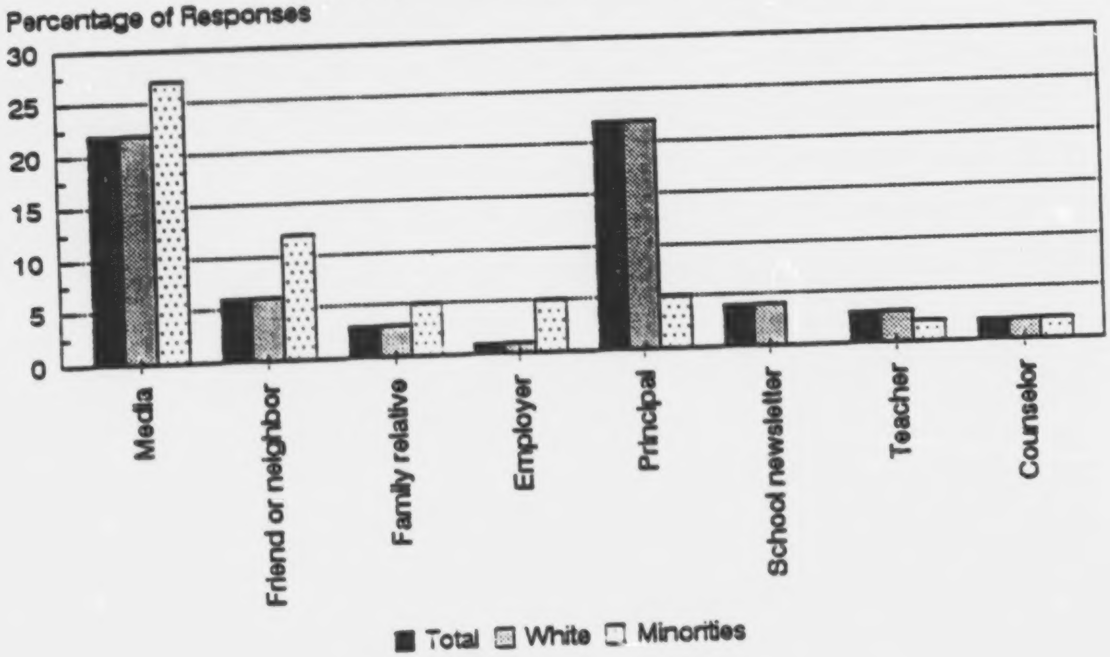


FIGURE 5

Most Important Sources of Information on Open Enrollment, by Race



continue monitoring the relative effectiveness of the strategies it employs to reach families who are less attuned to school-based sources of information.

Parents' Problems in Obtaining Information About Open Enrollment

Overall, the parents participating in the program reported that they experienced very few problems getting timely and accurate information on the choices available to them under the Open Enrollment option. Suburban parents experienced the fewest problems; only 17 percent reported any trouble, compared with 26 percent of both urban and rural parents. The greatest obstacle that all parents faced was an apparent lack of willingness to help on the part of the staff at their home school. Nineteen percent of all families reported that staff from their home school were not very helpful. Staff in rural schools were least helpful, with 22 percent of parents in these areas reporting that school staff were not cooperative, compared with 15 percent in suburban areas and 10 percent in urban areas.

Of perhaps greater significance is that, in response to a different item, 28 percent of all families reported that staff from their home school not only were not helpful but actually pressured them to stay at the school. More parents in rural areas (34 percent) felt pressured to stay in their school than parents in suburban and urban areas (23 percent and 11 percent, respectively). One interpretation of this finding is that enrollments in very small rural districts may be so marginal that the loss of even a small number of students could jeopardize programs or possibly raise the specter of school closings or consolidation. These data raise the question of what effect such pressure may have had on parents who considered using the Open Enrollment option but ultimately chose not to. Future research should ascertain whether this is a serious obstacle to parents' exercise of school choice.

Question 3: Why do parents decide to use the Open Enrollment option?

Items on the parent survey probed both the process by which families made the decision to use the Open Enrollment option and the reasons behind their decisions. Students in grades 7-12 who changed districts under Open Enrollment also received a survey with parallel items. Both sets of data are reported in this section.

While 78 percent of parents reported that changing schools was originally their idea, not their child's, the majority of parents did consult with and secure the consent of their children. Sixty percent discussed the quality of the new school with their children, and 51 percent discussed the effect that the transfer would have on the children's social life. (Twenty-eight percent noted that their children were too young to participate in the decision).

In the end, as seen in Table 4, 54 percent of parents indicated that they and their child agreed that a change of schools was desirable, and another 6 percent said their child had a neutral reaction to the transfer. Only 3 percent of all parents reported that they transferred a child against his or her wishes, while 9 percent said that the child insisted on a transfer while the parents remained either neutral or opposed.

The majority of secondary school students reported significant involvement in the decision to transfer to another school. Thirty percent of responding students said that they first proposed the idea of changing schools to their parents. In addition, 22 percent said that they insisted on changing schools even though their parents remained either neutral or opposed. Parent responses show substantial agreement that this was indeed the decision-making process: One-third of the responding parents of secondary school students said that their children first proposed the idea of changing schools and 16 percent claimed that they were either neutral or opposed to the transfer.

TABLE 4

Level of Agreement Between Parents and Their Children on the Decision to Change Districts
(Percent of responding parents)

	All Parents (n=1,111)	Secondary School Parents (n=542)
Child too young	28%	2%
Parent and child both favored change	54	73
Child neutral, parent in favor of change	6	5
Child opposed, parent in favor of change	3	3
Parents neutral, child in favor of change	8	15
Parents opposed, child in favor of change	1	1

Reasons for Using the Open Enrollment Option

Some advocates of public school choice programs like Minnesota's Open Enrollment option argue that allowing parents to choose a school for their child will foster competition among schools. They claim that if substantial numbers of parents try to enroll their children in the schools with the best academic reputations, poorer performing schools will be forced to improve. Critics of public school choice respond by arguing that parents may not, in fact, want to enroll their children in the best schools, but rather in schools that are closer to their home, place of work, or child care services. Clewell & Joy (1990), Maddaus (1990), and Bridge & Blackman (1978) provide evidence to support both arguments. In order to shed additional light on the issue, MDE surveyed parents and secondary school students participating in the Open

Enrollment option to determine the reasons why they chose to enroll in a particular school.

Parents. Analyses of parents' reasons for transferring their children to a school in another district reveal two patterns. When asked to indicate all of the reasons that figured in their selection of a non-resident school, parents most commonly selected three responses related to the academic quality of the school: the learning climate at the school, the educational services offered by the school, and the academic reputation of the school (see Figure 6 on the following page). However, when asked to identify the single most important reason for selecting a particular school, parents identified the school's academic reputation as the most important reason, its proximity to the home and educational services were tied for second, and its learning climate was fourth (see Figure 7 following page).

Further analysis of reasons cited by different populations reveals similar patterns.[1] Whites and minorities cite the same three academic reasons most often (learning climate, educational services, and academic reputation), as shown in Figure 6. In Figure 7, we find that whites and minorities also both cited an academic factor as the most important reason for transferring their child (academic reputation of the new school and educational services at the new school, respectively), and the new school's proximity to the home as the second most important reason.

Beyond these similarities, several significant differences between whites and minorities did arise: minority parents were much less likely to say that the school's learning climate or academic reputation were the most important reasons for their decision than white parents. Minority parents also considered the availability of child care and extensive extra-curricular activities at the new school to be as important as its learning climate and academic reputation (whites thought the latter two factors were far more important than child care or extra-curricular activities).

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[1] As noted earlier, the low survey response rate for minority families makes their responses less reliable indicators of the experience of all participating minority families.

FIGURE 6

Reasons for Transferring to Another District, by Race

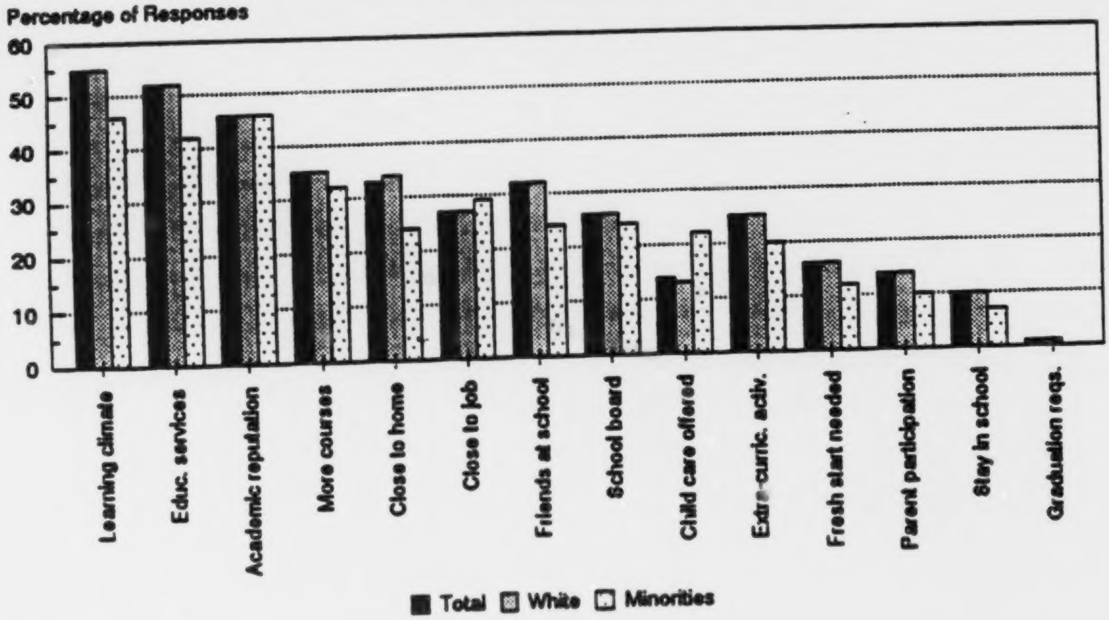
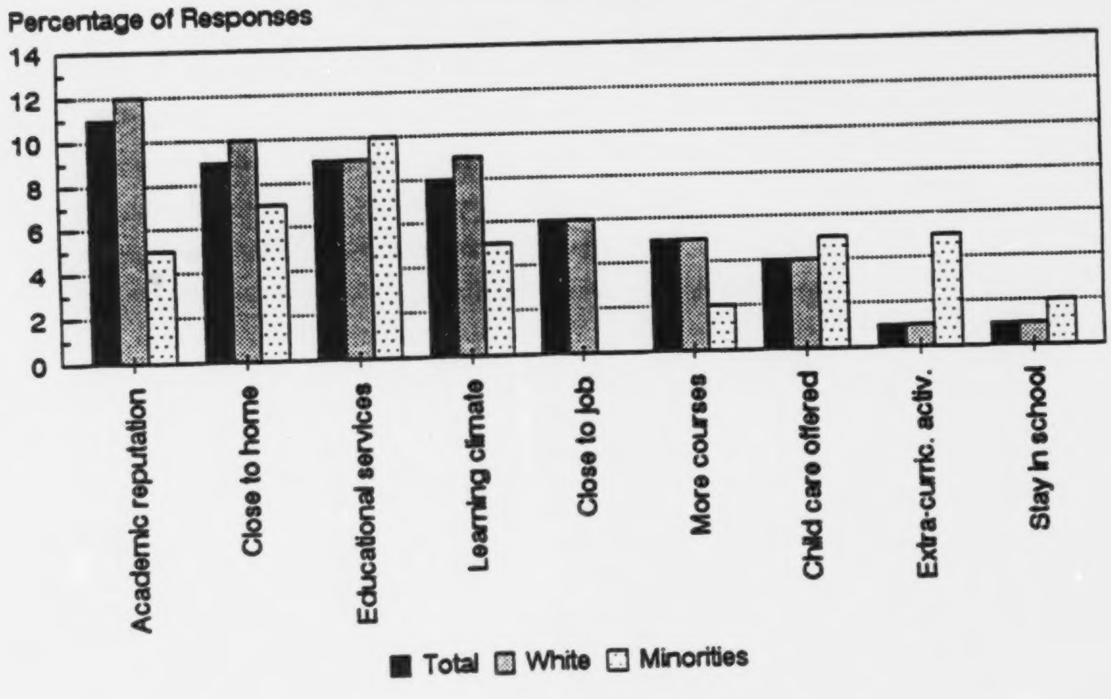


FIGURE 7

Most Important Reasons for Transferring to Another District, by Race



Analysis of family responses according to their place of residence (urban, suburban, rural) also revealed similar patterns (Figures 8 and 9 on the next page). The three most frequently cited reasons by parents in each of the three geographic areas were the new school's learning climate, educational services, and academic reputation. However, rural parents were far more likely to consider the range of courses offered at the school and its proximity to their job than parents in urban or suburban areas. In addition, parents in suburban and rural areas were almost twice as likely as parents in urban areas to consider the school's proximity to their home.

While urban and rural parents cite the academic reputation of the new school as the most important reason, suburban parents cite its proximity to the home as the most important factor in their decision. Moreover, the school's proximity to the home and office tied for the second most important reasons in the minds of rural parents.

When separated into two groups on the basis of income, parents' reasons for transferring their children differed in only a few areas, but these differences deserve notice. Higher-income parents were more likely to consider a school's academic reputation than lower-income parents (47 percent vs. 38 percent) as well as the availability of more courses at the new school (38 percent vs. 32 percent). Of greater significance is that lower-income parents said that the new school's proximity to their home was the most important factor in their decision, while higher-income parents said that the school's academic reputation was the most important factor in their decision. This finding suggests that lower-income families may be more likely to weigh seriously the costs and logistics of transportation to a new school than are wealthier families.[2]

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[2] Open Enrollment legislation provides funds to reimburse families who fall below the federal poverty line for the cost of transportation to the non-resident district boundary (at the rate of 15 cents per mile for up to 250 miles each week). However, according to MDE transportation officials, only 19 families applied for reimbursement from the state in 1990-91.

Reasons for Transferring to Another District, by Parents' Residence

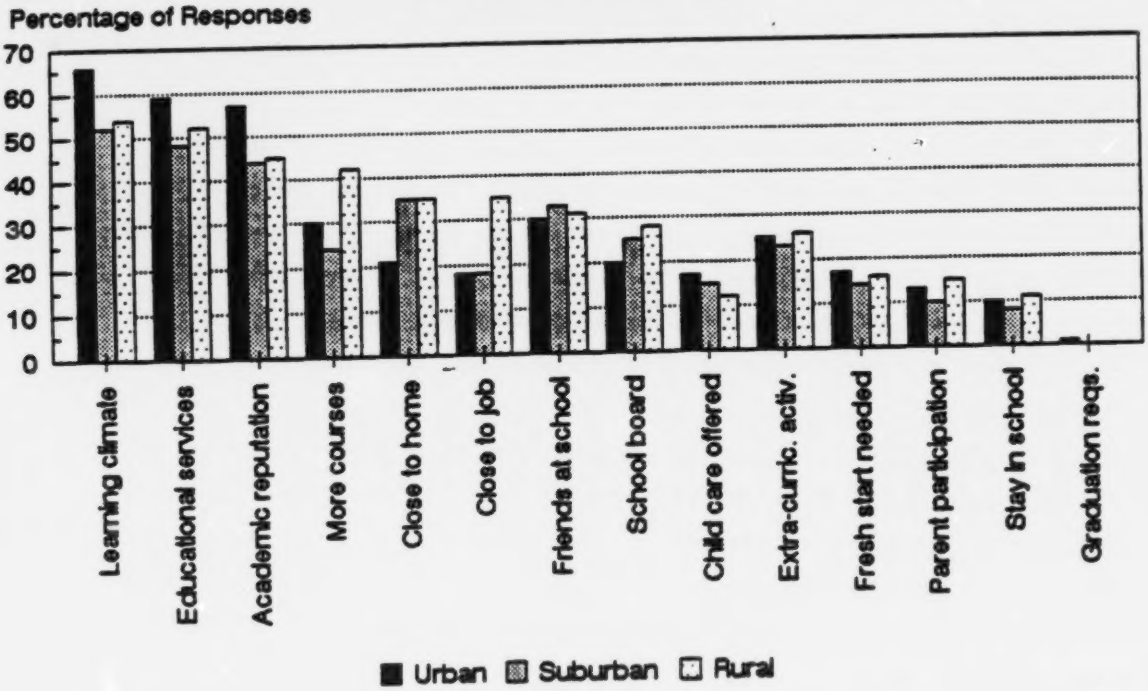
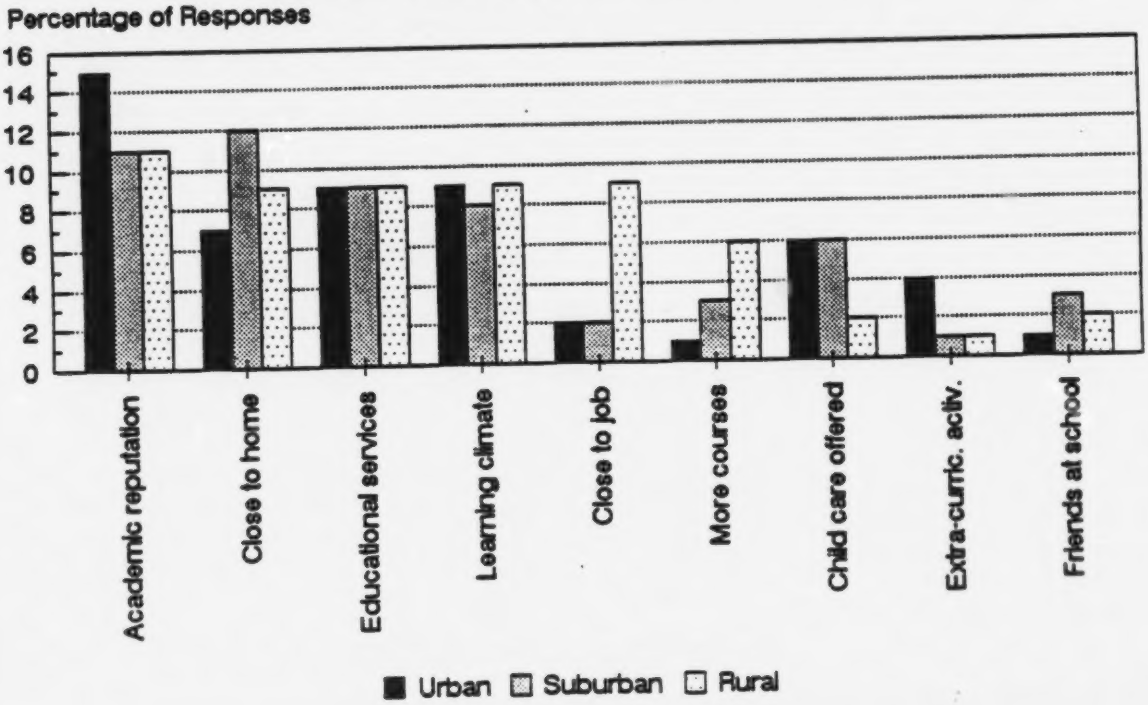


FIGURE 9

Most Important Reasons for Transferring to Another District, by Parents Residence



Students. Secondary school students were also asked why they wanted to change schools using the Open Enrollment option. The four most popular reasons among students overall were: to leave a school they did not like, to take courses not available at their old school, to get teachers interested in them, and to take courses better matched to their abilities.

When asked to elaborate on reasons they did not like their old schools, two major answers emerged. First, 59 percent of students said that their classes were not interesting or challenging, with rural students more likely to think their classes were not interesting (66 percent) than students in suburban or urban areas (52 percent each). Second, 57 percent said that students in their old school often disrupted their classes. No other explanation was cited by more than half of the students. Despite their dislike for their classes, however, students apparently did like their teachers, with 85 percent saying they got along well with their teachers, and 67 percent saying their teachers were interested in them (the latter statement somewhat contradicts the high percentage of students who said that they changed schools to find teachers who cared about them).

TABLE 5

Students' Reasons for Wanting to Change Schools, By Family Income (Percent of responding students)

	Higher-Income Students (n=169)	Lower-Income Students (n=395)	All Students (n=564)
To leave a school they did not like	47%	42%	46%
To take courses not available at old school	48	43	46
To get teachers who are interested in them	45	45	45
To take courses better suited to their ability	45	39	43

TABLE 5 (continued)

Students' Reasons for Wanting to Change Schools,
By Family Income
(Percent of responding students)

	Higher-Income Students (n=169)	Lower-Income Students (n=395)	All Students (n=564)
To study a subject of interest to them	32%	26%	30%
To avoid being bored	24	18	22
To be with friends	17	11	15
To help them stay in school	10*	19*	12

* The chances are 95 in 100 that there are real differences in the higher- and lower-income students' responses to this item after taking sampling error into account.

Students' reasons for wanting to change schools also differed somewhat depending on their family income, place of residence, and race. Table 5 shows students responses according to their families' income. While the differences between higher- and lower-income students' responses were statistically significant on only one item, other differences were nearly significant and deserve some attention. Students from higher-income families more often disliked their old school than were students from lower-income families. They were also more likely to want a greater variety of courses than students from lower-income families. Despite the fact that higher-income students were more likely to dislike school, they were, by their own account, less likely to be on the verge of dropping out compared with lower-income students (this was the only statistically significant finding).

In addition, the following findings regarding attitudes of students from different racial/ethnic backgrounds and residencies emerged as statistically significant. Rural students were more likely to cite the availability of additional courses as a factor in the decision to change schools (52 percent) than urban and suburban students (36 percent and 32 percent, respectively).

This may be explained by the limited resources available in the smallest rural districts. A recent report by Minnesota's Office of the Legislative Auditor concluded that rural districts with low enrollments provided far fewer opportunities for students and recommended gradual reorganization so that all operating districts have at least 100 students in grades 9-12 (Office of the Legislative Auditor, 1988).

Urban students were more likely to cite wanting to take courses more suited to their ability (51 percent) than suburban students (37 percent). Finally, suburban students were more likely to include their desire to be with their friends (19 percent) as a factor in their decision than rural students (10 percent). It seems logical that the greater population density in the metropolitan area enhances the likelihood that students will meet and become friends with students who attend other schools.

Among their reasons for changing schools, minority students are far more likely to cite wanting to be with their friends (30 percent) as a reason than are white students (13 percent). This is a curious finding, since a higher percentage of white parents cited wanting to send their children to the same school as their friends as a reason compared with non-white parents (see Figure 6 on page 30). Finally, white students were more likely to have disliked their old school (44 percent) than minority students (27 percent).

By isolating the responses of parents of secondary school students from the overall parent survey, we were able to compare their responses with those of their children. Secondary school students agreed with their parents on the importance of some factors in their decisions, but disagreed with them on others. Fifty percent of parents of secondary students said the availability of more courses at another school was a factor in their decision, and 46 percent of their children agreed. Similarly, 13 percent of these parents said that their children needed to change schools to help them stay in school, and 12 percent of their children agreed. However, 29 percent of the parents said that they enrolled their children in a new school so they could be with their friends, while only 15 percent of their children cited wanting to be with their friends as a factor in their desire to change schools.

Administrators. School administrators in high impact districts hold different views on why families are using Open Enrollment. In telephone interviews, they indicated that geographic considerations are primarily responsible for large numbers of students either entering or leaving their districts. Particularly in rural areas, non-resident schools may be closer to some students' homes than their resident schools, prompting them to apply to transfer to the non-resident school to cut down on their commute. Administrators in the high impact districts added that other considerations included the academic quality of the non-resident school and its provision of or proximity to child care services.

Question 4: What Outcomes or Impacts Are Associated With the Open Enrollment Option?

By surveying parents, secondary school students, and school districts, MDE sought to obtain respondents' early views on the outcomes or impacts of the Open Enrollment option. The perspectives of these three groups are quite different. Parents are presumably concerned about educational outcomes for their own child or children. Students, too, are likely to be looking for a better, or perhaps just a different, academic milieu. However, because schools are essentially social organizations, students' views on program outcomes might be expected to reflect a range of reactions to school climate issues. Districts, on the other hand, will be watching for the organizational impacts of Open Enrollment. What effects will an open transfer policy have on enrollments, budgets, program, staff, community relations, and a host of other operational areas?

We emphasize that we have no objective data on student achievement and thus cannot draw any conclusions on the effects that their participation in Open Enrollment has had on their grades or performance on standardized tests. Rather, our data consists of self-reported responses to questions that sought to determine their satisfaction with their new schools. However, changes in parents' and students' satisfaction with their schools are important outcomes of participation in Open Enrollment; such changes may reflect more appropriate educational services for the student and may lead to greater effort on his or her part.

We look first at the reported outcomes of changing schools on students, both through their parents' eyes and from their own perspective.

Initial Changes Experienced by Students

In general, it is too early to gauge authoritatively any impacts experienced by responding students who transferred schools through the Open Enrollment option since most of these children were in their first year at the new school when the parent and student surveys were administered. Nevertheless, both parents and secondary school students were asked to comment on changes they had noticed since they made the transfer.

Parents. Initial responses from parents, summarized in Table 6, show that at least 95 percent of all parents reported that their child's performance in all areas either improved or stayed the same when compared with their performance in their old school. According to parents, the greatest improvement occurred in their child's self-confidence (63 percent), satisfaction with their learning (60 percent) and motivation (60 percent). The lowest levels of improvement occurred in students' school attendance (19 percent) and time spent with their family (18 percent).

TABLE 6
Initial Changes Experienced by Students Since Transferring to New Schools,
(Percent of responding parents)
(n=920)

Behavioral Changes Noted	Has Improved	Has Become Worse	Has Stayed the Same
Confidence in own abilities	63%	1%	36%
Satisfaction with own learning	60	2	38
Motivation for learning	59	3	38
Satisfaction with teachers	57	3	41
Relationships with friends	52	4	44
Academic performance	51	3	46
Sense of responsibility	50	2	48
Amount of time spent studying	43	2	55
Higher educational aspirations	43	1	56
Participation in athletics	37	5	58
Higher career aspirations	37	1	62
Participation in extracurricular activities	35	4	61
School or class attendance	19	2	79
Time spent with family	18	5	77

Analysis of parents' responses according to their place of residence, income, and ethnicity also reveal that the overwhelming majority of each subpopulation saw either improvement or no change in their children on each of the possible impacts suggested by the survey item. However, there were several notable differences in the magnitude of the change perceived by minority parents when compared with white parents. For example, minority parents were twice as likely as white parents to report that their child's attendance at the new school had improved over his/her attendance at the old school (37 percents vs. 18 percent). Minority parents were also far more likely than white parents to report that their children now spend more time studying than they had previously (65 percent vs. 42 percent). However, there were no significant differences between nonminority and minority parents in terms of reported impacts of changing schools on motivation to learn, academic performance, and relationships with their peers.

Parents of students in rural areas were somewhat more likely to report that their children were more involved in athletics (37 percent vs. 31 percent) and other extra-curricular activities (37 percent vs. 27 percent) at their new school than parents of urban students, a finding that may be explained by a variety of reasons. For example, (1) rural families may be using Open Enrollment to move their children from small rural districts into neighboring districts with more varied opportunities, or (2) Open Enrollment may allow students to attend schools where they feel more comfortable and thus are more likely to participate in various activities.

Students. Secondary school students changing schools under Open Enrollment were also asked how their new school had made a difference in their lives. Their responses are summarized in Table 7. The most common change experienced by students was that they had more friends at the new school, feeling better about themselves (self-esteem) was second, and learning more was third. However, when asked to indicate the most important change they had experienced, students said that learning more in their new school was the most significant outcome and feeling better about themselves was the second most important.

TABLE 7

Possible Benefits Experienced by Secondary School Students, (Percent of students responding)

Statements	Improvement Noted (n=563)	Most Important Improvement (n=563)
I have more friends	67%	7%
I feel better about myself and my abilities	64	11
I am learning more	62	13
I have more in common with other students	61	5
Teachers and counselors spend more time with me	60	8

Students' responses to this item differed somewhat according to their race and place of residence, but very few of these differences were statistically significant. While white and minority students' responses to this item did not differ significantly, some differences were nearly significant and deserve some attention. White students were more likely to say that they had more in common with other students (57 percent vs. 48 percent) and had more understanding teachers (56 percent vs. 42 percent) than minority students. Minority students were more likely to say that they had fewer personal problems at their new school (39 percent vs. 30 percent), believed that they were more likely to finish high school (42 percent vs. 33 percent), and had improved their basic skills (52 percent vs. 37 percent). However, students from all backgrounds were equally likely to say that they learned more, had more friends, improved their self-esteem, and had better attendance at their new school. The latter finding contrasts with the responses of parents; more minority parents said that their child had better attendance at the new school than white parents.

TABLE 8

Possible Benefits Experienced by Secondary Students By Place of Residence (Percent of students responding)

Statements	Urban (n=66)	Suburban (n=207)	Rural (n=289)
I have more friends	53%	66%	65%
I feel better about myself and my abilities	65	63	66
I am learning more	71*	57*	64
I have more in common with other students	64	60	61
Teachers and counselors spend more time with me	55	62	60
My basic skills have improved	52	39	40
I am more sure that I will finish high school	44	37	35
I have fewer personal problems	33	35	32
My classes are smaller	27*	43*#	18#
I come to school more regularly	17	17	19

* The chances are 95 in 100 that there is a real difference between urban and suburban students' responses to the items marked with a *.

# The chances are 95 in 100 that there is a real difference between suburban and rural students' responses to the item marked with a #.

Some student responses did differ significantly according to their place of residence. As shown in Table 8, urban students were far more likely than their suburban counterparts to say that they were learning more in their new school. Suburban students were much more likely to say that their classes were smaller in their new schools than both urban and rural students. This is somewhat surprising since recent discussions with several groups of Minnesota students who have left urban schools for alternative learning environments revealed that their former schools often had oversized classes and impersonal atmospheres.

Other differences between students from urban, suburban, and rural areas were not statistically significant but deserve further notice. Suburban students were somewhat more likely than students in rural or urban areas to say that having teachers who spend more time getting to know them is a positive outcome of changing schools. Students in urban areas are more likely to say that they have improved their basic skills and are more likely to finish high school than students in suburban and rural areas. This suggests that the urban students using Open Enrollment may start from a somewhat lower achievement base and may, perhaps, be more at risk of school failure or dropping out. Students in all three areas are equally likely to be attending school more often, to have more in common with other students, to have fewer personal problems, and to have higher self-esteem as a result of transferring schools.

Summing up their experiences in their new schools, 52 percent of secondary school students said they are doing better in their new school, and 43 percent said they are doing about as well as they were in their old school, leaving only 5 percent who said they are doing worse. Overall, 95 percent of all secondary school students are either very satisfied or satisfied with their new school. In contrast, only 49 percent reported being either very satisfied or satisfied with their old school. Seven percent would prefer to return to their old school.

Enrollment Impacts on School Districts

Just as it is too early to gauge the full impact of Open Enrollment on students, it is also too early to determine all the effects that the program will have on school districts. However, the MDE survey asked superintendents to indicate the program's impact during the 1989-90 school year, when 80 percent of the state's districts participated, to establish a basis for comparison with their responses to similar questions at a later time. None of the data presented here should be considered as definitive conclusions about the effects of Open Enrollment on Minnesota's school districts.

Two types of impacts are discussed in this section. District administrators provided information on numbers and certain characteristics of students coming and going under the Open Enrollment option. These figures, supplemented in places by information collected by the Research Department of the state legislature, are presented and discussed first.

Second, using the District Survey MDE asked a series of questions to determine administrators' observations to date regarding the impact of Open Enrollment on programs, staffing, community relations, and other factors critical to the operation of school districts. Although 1989-90 was clearly too early to elicit information about long-term impacts, federal and state policy makers were interested to know how the option was being received at the district level.

Impact on districts' total enrollments. For the most part, Open Enrollment has not opened the floodgates or precipitated a mass movement of students across district boundaries. Almost half of the districts responding to MDE's district survey reported that no students had entered or left under Open Enrollment. As shown in Table 9, only 11 percent of the responding districts reported transferring more than 30 students.

TABLE 9

Numbers of Students Moving Under Open Enrollment
(Percent of districts reporting ranges)

	Number of Students Moving				
	None	1-9	10-29	30-99	100+
Districts with Students Entering (n=333)	42%	32%	19%	6%	.6%
Districts with Students Leaving (n=331)	45	37	15	4	*

* Although no districts responding to MDE's survey reported losing 100+ students, four districts indicated to House Research that 100 or more students had transferred out of their districts under Open Enrollment. Those districts are: Anoka (253 students); St. Paul (201 students); Mountain Iron-Buhl (158 students); and Westonka (Mound) (100 students).

Finally, fewer than 10 percent of districts reported significant changes (increases or decreases of 5 percent or more) in enrollment at different grade levels attributable to the Open Enrollment option. In fact, local shifts in population were far more likely to cause significant enrollment changes in districts at every grade level.

TABLE 10

Reasons for Significant Percentage Changes in Enrollment
(Percent of districts responding)

	Change Attributed to Open Enrollment (n=338)	Change Attributed to Population Shifts (n=338)
Kindergarten	6%	31%
Grades 1-3	7	23
Grades 4-6	5	23
Grades 7-9	7	22
Grades 10-12	7	23

Some opponents of choice feared that open enrollment would result in a migration of students from poor urban and rural districts into wealthier suburban districts, thus leaving the rural and urban districts financially strapped. Analysis of the characteristics of each family's resident district and the district to which they transferred their child reveals that this pattern of transfers is occurring only on a limited scale (Table 11). The number of students moving into and out of rural districts is virtually identical. This is not surprising since most rural districts are far from urban and suburban areas, meaning that students in these areas can only transfer to other rural districts. In contrast, urban districts experienced a net loss of 250 students (roughly 7 percent of students using Open Enrollment), with students leaving St. Paul accounting for most of this loss. As a group, suburban districts experienced a net gain of 202 students. Thus, in the aggregate, rural districts did not experience any loss in enrollment. The slight migration of students from urban areas into the suburban districts may or may not prove to be a trend as the program matures. None of these data, however, refute evidence from well-documented cases showing that individual districts lost significant numbers of students (see the Minnesota House Research Department's report).

TABLE 11

Transfer Patterns of Participating Students, by Urbanicity (Number of students)[1]

	Transferring Out of (n=3,575)	Transferring Into (n=3,551)	Net Change
Urban districts	388	138	-250
Suburban districts	1,985	2,187	+202
Rural districts	1,202	1,226	+24

Analyses of student transfer patterns also revealed a small migration of families from lower-income districts to higher-income districts. As a group, lower-income districts lost 150 students (or roughly 4 percent of the students who used Open Enrollment) to higher-income districts. Additional research will be necessary in future years to determine if these trends continue, or intensify, before any conclusions can be drawn about transfer patterns.

When district administrators were asked to identify the grade levels to which most of their incoming students transferred, they responded as follows:

Grade level	Number of districts reporting
K - 3	50
4 - 6	28
7 - 9	35
10 - 12	62

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[1] To analyze students' transfer patterns, we eliminated all students who did not indicate both a resident and a non-resident district on the application forwarded to MDE. The resulting 24-student-discrepancy between the number indicating a resident district and the number indicating a non-resident district can only be attributed to erroneous data entry and is sufficiently small that it should not affect the analyses.

The distribution of these figures suggests that entrance to Kindergarten and the transition to high school may be points at which parents are more likely to exercise school choice.

Impact on ethnic balance. Minnesota is predominantly white, with minority families concentrated primarily in urban areas. Thus, it is not surprising to find that 97 percent of suburban and rural district administrators predict that Open Enrollment will have "no impact" on racial and ethnic balance in their district. When asked if Open Enrollment had contributed to any significant increases or decreases in enrollment of minorities, 60 of districts reported no significant changes in ethnicity and 30 percent did not answer the question. Only two districts linked significant changes in ethnicity to the Open Enrollment option, and four districts considered Open Enrollment to be a minor factor.

Despite these findings, Open Enrollment's potential impact on racial balance is of particular concern to urban districts because their student populations are more diverse than those found in other Minnesota districts. St. Paul represents an interesting case study in this respect. Unlike Minneapolis, St. Paul chose not to invoke its desegregation restrictions to keep students from entering or leaving the city through the Open Enrollment option when it was required to participate beginning in 1989-90. That decision could, if the present trend continues, prove to have negative repercussions on racial balance in the city's public schools.

In 1989-90, the St. Paul Public Schools reported that its student enrollment was 58 percent white and 42 percent minority. MDE received 308 approved applications from St. Paul students wishing to leave the city. Of these, 85 percent were white and 15 percent were minorities, including 19 Hispanics, eight Native Americans, eight African-Americans, and nine Asians.[2] MDE also received 64 applications from students seeking to transfer into St. Paul public schools from surrounding districts. Of these, 72 percent were white and 28 percent were minorities, including one Hispanic, four Native Americans, four African-Americans, and nine Asians. Thus, whites left St. Paul in numbers exceeding their share of the entire student enrollment, and the number of whites transferring into the city did not compensate for this loss. To date, St. Paul has not changed its policy of allowing all transfers under Open Enrollment, reflecting the fact that the effect of a net loss of 215 white students on racial balance is relatively insignificant; however, if this trend continues as participation in Open Enrollment grows, it could have a negative impact on racial balance in the city's schools.

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[2] Ninety-four percent of the white students leaving St. Paul were leaving public schools; the rest were leaving private schools.

Looking at the St. Paul case from the perspective of the suburban districts also yields an interesting finding. While minority students left St. Paul in disproportionately small numbers, more minorities applied to leave St. Paul than applied to enter the city. Thus, the overwhelmingly white suburban districts around the city actually gained minority students, although the net gain (a total of 18 minority students) was not large enough to have an impact on the racial composition of their student bodies. Moreover, this small gain may have been overshadowed by the disproportionately large number of white students entering the suburban districts from St. Paul.

Financial Impact of Open Enrollment on Districts

When a student transfers under Open Enrollment, Minnesota state aid follows the student to the nonresident district. The amount of aid is determined on the basis of average daily membership. Each student in the state generates a level of foundation revenue, which includes some, but not all local levies, basic state foundation aid, and all tier revenues derived from state formulas. In 1989-90, it did not include AFDC foundation revenue, categorical state aid, or federal funds (with regard to the federal Chapter 1 program, however, federal legislation allows states to adjust their Chapter 1 allocations to compensate districts admitting a substantial number of non-resident students. Minnesota may elect to make these adjustments in the future to reduce the financial burden on districts who provide Chapter 1 services to non-resident students.). Handicapped participants are funded as tuition students, meaning that the resident district collects all general education revenue and pays the receiving district for tuition and excess special education costs.

Asked to predict the impact of options programs, 22 percent of district administrators indicated that they would have a "mostly negative" impact on district financial resources.[3] This view can probably be attributed to fears that if large numbers of students leave a district and state aid follows them, the resident district will be left without the numbers of students needed to support all of its programs, services, and staff. So far, few districts have lost enough students to fulfill such dire predictions. Those who have lost large numbers are considered anomalies because their losses are not exclusively attributed to Open Enrollment. Yet, interviews with administrators in high impact districts reveal that the financial effects, both positive and negative, can be substantial. Some districts were forced to close a school due to the loss of revenue (one district lost $430,000 in operating funds), while a small district was able to hire five new full-time teachers because of a large influx of students.

Because most federal aid did not follow students to non-resident districts in 1989-90, there was concern that transfers of, for example, large numbers of students from districts receiving large amounts of Chapter 1 support to wealthier districts that receive less Chapter 1 support might create a problem for the receiving district. If the receiving districts continued to provide Chapter 1 services to the incoming eligible students in 1989-90, they did so at their own expense. The percentage of districts reporting that Chapter 1 students crossed district lines to enroll in their schools was small, as shown in Table 12. Federal regulations governing the use of Chapter 1 funds allow states some flexibility on the issue of attaching dollars to individual students. This is a policy area that may receive more attention in future years.

ED, through its Office of Education Research and Improvement (OERI), is currently supporting a study conducted by the University of Minnesota to examine the impact of Open Enrollment on special education. Recent telephone interviews with a small sample of district administrators indicate that some problems are arising in this area, primarily related to administrative burden.

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[3] No other factor received such a high percentage of administrators predicting a "mostly negative" impact.

TABLE 12

Districts With Entering Nonresident Students Eligible for Federal Categorical Programs (Percent of responding districts)

	Percent of Districts with Numbers of Entering Students (n=323)				
Program	None	1-9	10-29	30-99	100+
Chapter 1	80%	19%	0.6%	0.6%	0%
P.L. 94-142 (handicapped students)	68	29	3	0.9	0
Free or reduced price breakfast/lunch	62	28	3	0.9	0.9

Impacts on Programs at the District Level

At this early date, administrators in most responding districts, view Open Enrollment as having "no impact" on key factors that might be associated with school improvement or educational reform initiatives. [Refer to Table 13, on the next page] Even in districts that gained or lost the most students, administrators tended to comment that little had changed as a result; some added a course or two, but none had restructured their educational programs.[4]

However, administrators who have seen a positive impact in these and other areas tend to outnumber those who have seen a negative impact by a large margin. More districts experienced positive impacts in the areas of district/school planning (29 percent), responsiveness of the school board to the community (28 percent), and parent participation (22 percent) than any other impacts. Areas where negative impacts were more commonly reported included the financial resources available for education (22 percent), and student/teacher ratios (11 percent).

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[4] We note that the Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), which represents the state's superintendents, initially opposed the Open Enrollment option. However, their responses to survey items did not appear to indicate a negative bias toward Open Enrollment.

TABLE 13

Administrators' Perceptions of the Impact of Open Enrollment on Selected Educational Factors
(Percent of districts responding)
(n=327)

	No Impact	Positive Impact	Negative Impact
Diversity of teaching styles	89%	10%	1%
Instructional innovation	80	17	3
Roles of school staff	78	16	5
Student/teacher ratio	78	11	11
School-level accountability	78	21	1
Student support services	77	17	5
Parent participation	74	22	4
School course offerings	73	20	7
School board responsiveness	69	28	3
Financial resources	64	14	22
District/school planning	62	29	9

The MDE District Survey also asked administrators to predict the long-term influence that Open Enrollment would have on curricular and instructional reforms, other educational factors, institutional relationships, and community relationships. A plurality of administrators predicted that Open Enrollment would have no impact on curricular or instructional reform, with slightly fewer predicting that Open Enrollment would encourage positive reforms; very few districts (10 percent or less) predicted negative effects. Administrators were almost evenly divided regarding whether Open Enrollment would encourage or have no impact on the development of new programs (46 percent vs. 47 percent) or on the addition of new courses (46 percent vs. 47 percent). In

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other areas of school reform, the balance tilted more toward predictions of no impact, as shown in Table 14.

TABLE 14

Predictions About the Long-Term Effects of Open Enrollment
(Percent of responding districts)
(n=328)

	Open Enrollment Will:	
Prediction	Encourage	Have No Impact
Increase in decisionmaking at the school level	28%	67%
Development of new/innovative instructional strategies	36	61
Assumption of new roles by education personnel	38	59
Curriculum articulation and coordination around desired outcomes	38	59
Improvement in support services for students	38	57

Encouragement of Competition Within and Among Districts

A major premise of the argument in support of parental choice programs such as Open Enrollment is that they will promote increased competition among schools and districts which, in turn, will lead to school improvement. This argument is based on a theory that, faced with competition, schools will behave like businesses and take steps to improve and promote their services. This section presents superintendents' predictions of Open Enrollment's capacity to generate competition among public schools and between public and private schools. These predictions are strictly speculative and should not be seen as definitive conclusions regarding the power of Open Enrollment to generate such competition; follow-up surveys will gauge the extent to which Open Enrollment actually promotes competition among schools.

When asked to predict long-run changes in relationships between schools within their own districts, administrators in 74 percent of responding districts predicted no change, 19 percent predicted increased cooperation, and only 7 percent predicted increased competition.

There was far less agreement on the impact of choice options on relationships between districts. Forty-three percent of district administrators predict that competition among districts for students will increase; 31 percent predicted increased cooperation and 27 percent predicted no change. While most districts (61 percent) predict no change in relationships between public and private schools, 32 percent foresee increased competition.

When asked if Open Enrollment would ultimately foster increased cooperation between private early childhood programs and public elementary programs, only 23 percent agreed, while 68 percent predicted no change. Fewer than 10 percent predicted increased competition in this area.

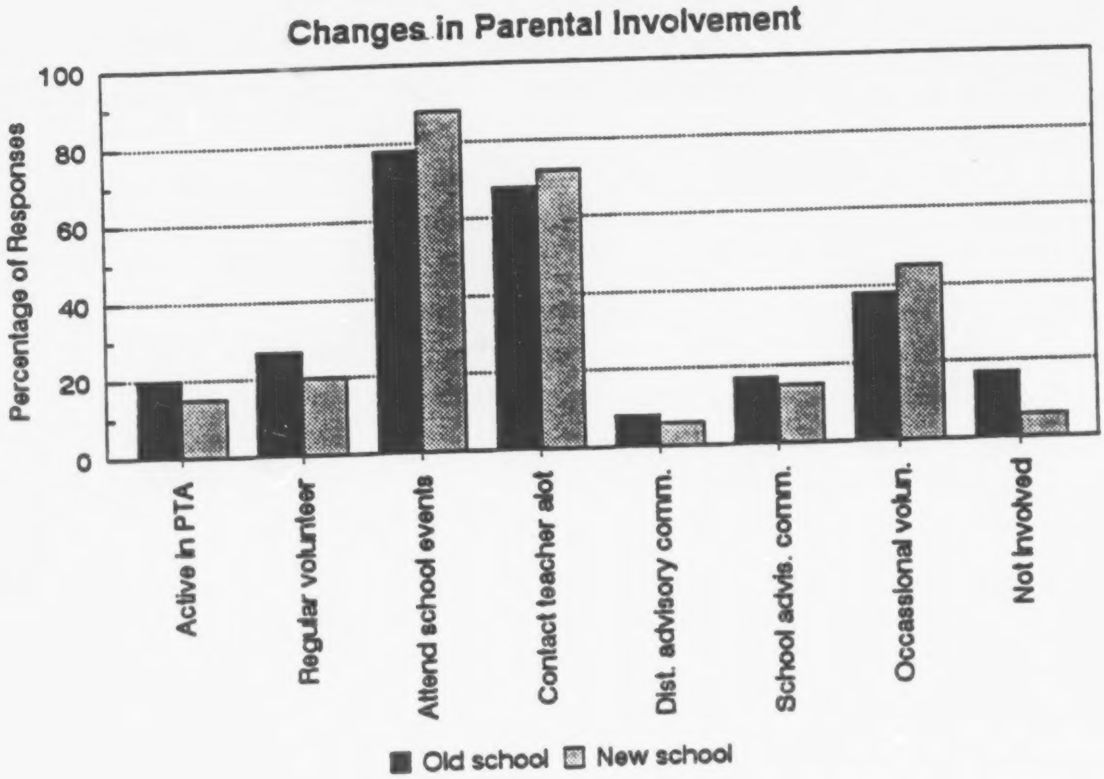
More than 70 percent of districts predicted no change in their relationships with community organizations, social service agencies, and local businesses as a result of Open Enrollment. Most of the remaining districts predicted increased cooperation.

Effects on Parent Involvement

Advocates of Open Enrollment have argued that when parents are given a choice of schools for their children, they are more likely to become involved and their levels of involvement will increase. In exploring this issue, we found that administrators in 74 percent of the responding districts had not, to date, observed any impact on levels of parent participation as a result of Open Enrollment. Another 22 percent reported seeing positive impacts and fewer than 4 percent reported any negative impact. Looking to the future, 40 percent believed that Open Enrollment would encourage increased parent participation, 56 percent predicted no impact, and only 5 percent expected a negative influence.

Parents who used the Open Enrollment option report that they are more likely to keep informed of their child's progress, but are less likely to be involved on parent advisory committees at the school or to volunteer regularly at the school. Figure 12 shows that more parents report attending school events and contacting their child's teacher at the new school than at the old school. Difficulty in reaching the new school is a factor for 16 percent of the parents reporting a reduction in their participation. However, the percentage of parents reporting that they were not involved in their child's school in any way fell from 17 percent to 6 percent. Future research should continue to monitor this trend.

FIGURE 10



Impacts on Student Performance

In the final analysis, the most important questions have to do with the ultimate impact of Open Enrollment on student outcomes. Will this initiative improve the educational system in ways that promote increased learning? The District Survey asked administrators to report any observed changes in school climate and student academic performance. Once again, respondents in most districts had seen no impact on these areas (school climate--69 percent; student academic performance--89 percent). However, 20 percent reported an improved school climate, and 33 percent predicted that it would improve in the long run. While very few districts (9 percent) reported any observable positive change in student performance, 24 percent believed that Open Enrollment would have a beneficial influence in the long run.

A Final Word

As we have taken great pains to emphasize throughout this report, the analyses presented are intended to be baseline indicators on the use and impacts of Minnesota's Open Enrollment option--a legislatively-authorized program giving parents the opportunity to apply to the district and school that they wish for their child to attend. These data offer a benchmark against which to measure subsequent readings on the program as it matures and becomes institutionalized.

Certain findings that emerged from the baseline data collection can be immediately useful to state and local policymakers. For example, it is quite clear that different groups of parents rely on different types of sources for their information about education-related matters. This has some implications for the dissemination strategies used to publicize the program. Similarly, the ambiguities that exist between regulations for federal categorical programs and state interdistrict choice programs indicate the need for establishing some federal-state dialogues to resolve any misinterpretations.

However, for the most part, the analyses presented await future points of comparison to acquire their full meaning. It would be a serious mistake to cite this report as evidence that interdistrict choice will continue to be used by only 1 percent of families with children in school until further data are available. It would be equally inappropriate to definitively conclude that the Open Enrollment program will draw large numbers of private school students into the public school sector, or that interdistrict choice will exacerbate white flight from the schools in urban areas.

During 1991-92, we will undertake some follow-up data collection activities (e.g., a survey of a sample of school districts) and some activities designed to extend understanding of how parents and students do or do not make use of the full range of educational choice options available, particularly in the metropolitan Minneapolis-St. Paul area. In addition, using data collected by the state, we will prepare trend analyses on the use of the various state-approved choice programs. The resulting information will extend understanding of the Minnesota experiment and assist other states that have more recently begun to implement similar types of parental and student choice options.

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APPENDIX A

STUDY METHODOLOGY

STUDY METHODOLOGY

In this appendix, we provide specific information on data collection procedures, study samples, and the precision of estimates based on survey data.

Data Collection

This study is the result of cooperative research efforts between the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE). It was designed to obtain preliminary data on the use and impact of Minnesota's Open Enrollment option, a state statute that allows parents to choose the district where their children will attend school.

The data reported on here were obtained through mail surveys of three populations: (1) families with approved applications to change school districts for the 1989-90 school year; (2) within those families, students in grades 7-12; and (3) school district administrators. Survey instruments were developed and refined by Policy Studies Associates, as contractor to ED. Draft versions were reviewed by a panel of experts convened by ED and by a stakeholder's group in Minnesota.

MDE administered the surveys, including follow-up with nonrespondents, and prepared the data. Westat, Inc. conducted data analyses specified by PSA.

Survey Samples

At the time of this data collection effort, procedures for the use of the Open Enrollment Option required families to submit a standard, state-developed application form to the district of choice on or before January 1 of the year in which they wished to enroll their children in the nonresident district.[1] Receiving districts approved or rejected the applications. Approved applications were submitted to the state Department of Education and served as the source for a universe mailing list of participating families. In addition to names and addresses, the data set created from the applications included race/ethnicity, student grade in school, and the name of the receiving district. Districts were not required to submit rejected applications to the state, thus thwarting any efforts to survey this cohort of families.

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[1] Residents of Duluth, Minneapolis, and St. Paul--the state's three districts with court-ordered desegregation plans--could apply to change districts at any time during the year.

Response Rates and Responding Samples

Table A-1 provides information on the number of survey returns. The column labelled "Other Surveys Returned" indicates the number of parents and secondary school students who returned an uncompleted survey form with the notation that they had never actually exercised their approved option to change school districts.

TABLE A-1

SURVEY RESPONSE RATES

Survey Sample	Number of Surveys Distributed	Codable Surveys Returned	Other Surveys Returned	Missing
Participating Families	2,663	1,377	393	893
Participating Secondary School Students	1,966	645	393	928
School District Administrators	432	338	---	94

As indicated in the body of the report, only one of Minnesota's five urban districts responded to the survey. Analyses of school district data are thus only representative of the state's suburban and rural school systems.

Sampling Tolerances

When interpreting survey results, the reader should bear in mind that all surveys based on a sample of a total population are subject to sampling error. Sampling error is the difference between the results obtained from a sample survey and the results that would have been obtained if an entire population had been surveyed. The size of the sampling error depends on the response rate.

You may use the following table to estimate the sampling error for any percentage in this study. The computed allowances take into consideration the effect of the sample design upon the sampling error. The figures below represent the confidence interval, or the range (plus or minus the figure shown) around the percentage within which the results of repeated samplings in the same time period could be expected to fall 95 percent of the time, assuming all other things are equal. For percentage estimates, the confidence intervals get smaller as sample sizes get larger and get larger the closer the percentage estimate is to 50 percent.

TABLE A-2

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of a Percentage

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence level)*

Sample Size

	50	300	600	900	1200	1500
Percentages Near 10	8	4	3	2	2	2
Percentages Near 20	11	5	4	3	3	2
Percentages Near 30	13	6	4	3	3	3
Percentages Near 40	14	6	4	4	3	3
Percentages Near 50	14	6	4	4	3	3
Percentages Near 60	14	6	4	4	3	3
Percentages Near 70	13	6	4	3	3	3
Percentages Near 80	11	5	4	3	3	2
Percentages Near 90	8	4	3	2	2	2

---

*The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figure shown.

This table should be used in the following manner: Suppose that on the student survey, where the sample size is 645, 37 percent of the sample responded in a certain way. To determine the sampling error, we would go to the row for "percentages near 40" in the table, and across to the column for sample size headed "600." The number at this point is 4, which means that the 37 percent found in the sample is subject to a sampling error of plus or minus four points. Therefore, the chances are 95 in 100 that the percent for the entire population would lie between 33 and 41 percent, with the most likely percentage being 37 percent.

When comparing survey results for two samples (for example, results from the parent survey compared to results from the student survey), the question arises as to how large the difference between the groups must be before one is reasonably sure that it reflects a real difference. The tables below present the number of percentage points that must be allowed for such comparisons.

Table A-3a is for percentages near 20 or 80; Table A-3b is for percentages near 50. For percentages in between these points, the allowable error lies between those shown.

TABLE A-3a

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence levels)*

Percentages near 20 or percentages near 80

Size of Sample	50	300	600	900	1200	1500
50	16	12	12	12	12	12
300	12	7	6	6	5	5
600	12	6	5	4	4	4
900	12	6	4	4	4	4
1200	12	5	4	4	3	3
1500	12	5	4	4	3	3

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* The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figures shown.

TABLE A-3b

Recommended Allowance for Sampling Error of the Difference

In Percentage Points
(at 95 in 100 confidence levels)*

Percentages near 50

Size of Sample	50	300	600	900	1200	1500
50	20	15	15	15	14	14
300	15	8	7	7	7	6
600	15	7	6	5	5	5
900	15	7	5	5	5	4
1200	14	7	5	5	4	4
1500	14	6	5	4	4	4

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* The chances are 95 in 100 that the sampling error is not larger than the figures shown.

These tables should be used in the following manner. Suppose that 55 percent of the parents and 45 percent of the students marked the same response to a question. There is a 10 percent difference in their responses. However, some of this difference may be the result of sampling error. The parent sample size is 1300 and the student sample size is 700. Since the percentages are near 50, we would refer to Table 2, and look for the number under the column labeled "1200" and the row labeled "600." We find the number 5, which tells us that we must allow 5 percentage points for anomalies in the sample. We can conclude that the parents are between 5 and 15 points higher than the percentage among Students. This conclusion would be correct 95 percent of the time. Therefore, we can conclude with confidence that a real difference exists between the parents and the students on that particular question.

In this example, if the percentage point spread between the two groups had been only 3 points, then the difference between the two samples would have been inconclusive.

APPENDIX B

STUDENT SURVEYS

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

DISTRICT SURVEY

STATE ENROLLMENT OPTIONS PROGRAM

IMPORTANCE OF THIS SURVEY:

This survey is being conducted to gather information regarding local school district participation in Minnesota's enrollment options programs, local implementation of these programs, their impact on district and school administration, and administrators' views of outcomes which may result. Data collected in this survey will be used in preparing reports to the Minnesota State Legislature, the U.S. Department of Education, and the public. Survey data will also be used as a basis for future research on these Minnesota programs.

PLEASE RETURN TO MDE IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE BY:

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this survey the term "OPTIONS" encompasses only the three programs defined below:

Open Enrollment Program (or "School District Enrollment Options")

Students entering Kindergarten through grade 12 may choose to enroll in a school or program located in a district other than the one in which the pupil lives.

High School Graduation Incentives Program (HSGI)

Persons, at risk of dropping out or who have dropped out, who wish to finish high school and who qualify under this program have an opportunity to earn a high school diploma by choosing from a variety of programs funded by the State including enrollment in:

- any public high school
- any approved private (nonsectarian) school
- any approved public alternative program
- an Area Learning Center
- a college or technical institute under the Post Secondary Enrollment Options

Area Learning Centers (ALC)

One option available to students under HSGI or Open Enrollment Programs. Area Learning Centers offer students individualized programs which may include academic instruction, trade and vocational skills training, work experience, and transition services.

This survey is not intended to gather information about the Post Secondary Enrollment Options program (which was studied separately), except as it serves students participating in HSGI.

MINNESOTA OPTIONS PROGRAM - DISTRICT SURVEY

Name of School District: ______________________________

Name of Administrator Completing Survey: ______________________

Title: ______________________

Telephone: (   ) ____________________

School District Address: ______________________________

____

A. PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

A-1. Have any students entered or left your district under the MDE OPTIONS programs or other mechanisms listed below? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Open Enrollment Program	78.4
b.	High School Graduation Incentives	47.0
c.	Area Learning Centers	35.0
d.	Nonresident student attendance agreements	59.0
e.	Tuition arrangements	35.6
f.	Contracts with private alternative schools	6.9
g.	None of the above	8.0

A-2. Please provide your district's enrollment figures, by the grade levels indicated, for last year and this year.

		1988-89 (as of May 1989)	1989-90 (as of October 1989)
a.	Kindergarten	________	________
b.	Grades 1 - 3	________	________
c.	Grades 4 - 6	________	________
d.	Grades 7 - 9	________	________
e.	Grades 10 - 12	________	________
f.	TOTAL ENROLLMENT	________	________

A-3. If the figures in A-2. show a change in enrollment (up or down) of more than 5% overall or in any grade level, please CHECK which of the following factors have caused this change. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

(NOTE: If NONE of the figures in A-2 reflect more than 5% change in enrollment, SKIP to A-4.)

	Grade Levels				
	K	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12
a. Open Enrollment Program	5.9	6.5	5.3	6.5	6.8
b. High School Graduation Incentives	XXXX	XXXX	0.0	0.3	2.1
c. Area Learning Centers	XXXX	XXXX	0.0	0.3	2.1
d. Nonresident student attendance agreements	1.2	2.1	1.8	2.7	2.7
e. Tuition arrangements	0.9	0.9	0.6	2.1	2.1
f. Local changes in population	30.8	22.8	23.4	22.2	22.5
g. School closing/opening	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.2	0.9
h. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	3.6	3.0	3.9	4.2	4.2
______________________	____	____	____	____	____

A-4. Please provide your district's enrollment distribution by ethnicity, for last year and this year, to the nearest whole percent.

	1988-89 (as of May 1989)	1989-90 (as of October 1989)
a. White, not Hispanic	________%	________%
b. Black, not Hispanic	________%	________%
c. Hispanic	________%	________%
d. Asian/Pacific Islander	________%	________%
e. American Indian/Native Alaskan	________%	________%
f. Other	________%	________%
TOTAL	100%	100%

A-5. If there are changes of more than 5% in enrollment by ethnicity, to what extent are the OPTIONS programs a factor? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	We have not experienced a significant change	60.4	(1)
b.	OPTIONS programs are a major factor	0.6	(2)
c.	OPTIONS programs are a minor factor	1.2	(3)
d.	We have experienced a significant change, but it is NOT attributed to OPTIONS programs	2.7	(4)
	Missing	35.2	

A-6. For school year 1989-90, please indicate the number of students who entered or left your school district through participation in one of the following programs. Base your figures on the enrollment reported to MDE as of October 1989. (IF NONE, WRITE IN "0")

		(1) \# Entered	(2) \# Left
a.	Open Enrollment Program	42.0	43.8
b.	High School Graduation Incentives	84.6	71.3
c.	Area Learning Centers	93.8	79.3
d.	Nonresident student attendance agreements	57.7	58.9
e.	Tuition arrangements	79.9	81.7
f.	Contracts with private alternative schools	98.5	95.6
g.	Totals	22.8	23.4

A-7. How many of the students reported in A-6 as entering your district in school year 1989-90 under OPTIONS programs were:

a.	Beginning Kindergarten	54.4
b.	Entering from other MN public schools	24.9
c.	Entering from non-public schools	85.2
d.	Otherwise not enrolled in a MN public school district in 1988-89	87.3
e.	Total	22.8

NOTE: Total for this item should equal the total for "# entered" in A-6.g. above.

A-8. How many of the students entering your district in 1989-90 under OPTIONS programs are receiving services under the following Federal categorical grants/entitlements? (IF NONE, WRITE IN "0")

a.	Chapter One/Compensatory Education (except Migrant Ed)	76.3
b.	Migrant Education	95.3
c.	Indian Education	92.9
d.	Bilingual Education	94.1
e.	Handicapped/Special Education (PL 94-142)	64.8
f.	Free or reduced price lunch/breakfast	59.2

A-9. Of those students (resident and nonresident) in your district served through the High School Graduation Incentives (HSGI) program, how many have chosen each of the following options (non-duplicate count)? (IF NONE, WRITE IN "0")

a.	Enrollment in another public high school	79.6
b.	Enrollment in a contracted private (nonsectarian) school	95.9
c.	Enrollment in a State approved public alternative program	88.8
d.	Enrollment in an Area Learning Center	80.5
e.	Enrollment in a college or technical college under the Post Secondary Enrollment Option	76.0
f.	Enrollment in an adult basic education diploma program, which has an HSGI contract with the local school board	93.5
g.	Total	56.2

A-10. Please indicate what types of OPTIONS program administrative records are maintained by your district, and whether these records are computerized. (CHECK ONE COLUMN IN EACH ROW)

	(1) Not kept	(2) Kept on computer	(3) Kept-but not on computer	(4) Not applicable
a. Lists, by program, for all students seeking to leave the district under any statute or program	19.8	9.5	49.1	12.1
b. Lists, by program, for all students seeking to enter the district under any statute or program	18.6	9.8	47.6	13.9
c. Lists, by program, but only for students whose move was approved (to enter or leave)	12.1	13.0	41.1	18.0
d. Mailing list of incoming students	18.0	21.9	27.8	16.3
e. Mailing list of outgoing students	24.3	12.7	28.1	18.3
f. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)				
______________________		3.0	1.2	
______________________		___	___	

A-11. In your district, do individual schools or programs maintain lists of OPTIONS students, by OPTION program? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Yes, at all schools	38.5	(1)
b.	Yes, at some schools	4.7	(2)
c.	No	51.4	(3)
d.	Don't know	5.4	(4)

B. CONSUMER INFORMATION

B-1. Did your district provide information to all resident parents and students on the OPTIONS programs?

a.	Yes	94.6	(1)	
b.	No	5.4	(2)	IF NO, SKIP to SECTION C.

B-2. What was the primary source of the OPTIONS program information that your district disseminated? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Information prepared by the Minnesota Department of Education was disseminated by our district	68.5	(1)
b.	Our district prepared information which was disseminated	26.4	(2)
c.	Individual school buildings prepared and disseminated information	1.1	(3)
d.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	4.0	(4)

B-3. What types of information were provided? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Information on the purposes and procedures of all OPTIONS programs	70.1
b.	Information on the Open Enrollment Program	68.9
c.	Information on the High School Graduation Incentives program	50.3
d.	Information on Area Learning Centers	34.0
e.	Information on program eligibiity	48.5
f.	Information on how and when to apply to OPTIONS programss	63.9
g.	OPTIONS program application forms	31.4
h.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	2.7

B-4. How was OPTIONS program information disseminated?
(CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Student-carried brochures or fliers	17.8
b. School newsletter to families	47.3
c. School newspapers to students	14.8
d. School-sponsored informational meetings	12.1
e. District newsletters	51.5
f. Mailed brochures or fliers	11.8
g. Local newspaper	10.1
h. Local radio or TV	10.1
i. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	7.1

B-5. To whom was __printed__ information provided? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. To every household in your district	55.9
b. To every household in your district with school age children	29.0
c. To every student in your district	
d. To every public school student in your district	21.0
e. Only to those families or individuals who requested information	20.7
f. To households/families/students in other districts (unrequested)	19.8
g. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	4.1
	11.5

B-6. Were any special groups targeted to receive information about the OPTIONS programs?

a. Yes 6.6 (1)

(PLEASE SPECIFY WHICH GROUPS)____________________

b. No 93.4 (2) IF NO, SKIP TO B-8

B-7. In addition to the distribution means indicated in B-4, what other means were used to target information to special groups? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Church or synagogue meetings 0.9
b. Translators or translated brochures and fliers 0.6
c. Social service agency meetings 2.1
d. Community agency meetings 1.5
e. Drug treatment center or Alcoholics Anonymous meetings 1.2
f. Adolescent parent groups 2.1
g. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) ____________________ 1.8

B-8. What are your district's costs for providing information to students and families regarding OPTIONS? (NEAREST WHOLE DOLLAR)

a. Actual expenditure for fiscal year 88-89: $__________

b. Planned expenditure for fiscal year 89-90: $__________

B-9. What types of special assistance, if any, did your district provide to individual families during the decision-making process? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Consultation and advice on programs in this district	76.6
b.	Consultation and advice on programs in other districts	23.7
c.	Strategies to assist students in gaining admittance to their school of choice	28.7
d.	Evaluation and "matching" of students with programs to best suit their individual needs	22.8
e.	Assigned staff person(s) to answer questions	45.6
f.	No special assistance was provided	9.5
g.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	4.7

C. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

C-1. What OPTIONS information and services provided to your district by MDE were most helpful? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Program Fact Sheets	76.9
b.	Program guidelines	71.0
c.	OPTIONS Hotline	24.9
d.	Model press releases	58.6
e.	Family Guides	25.4
f.	Personal assistance from MDE staff	17.8
g.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	2.4

C-2. What other assistance from MDE would be helpful to your district? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. More complete information on the OPTIONS programs 14.8

b. Clearer information on the OPTIONS programs 20.1

c. Workshops on OPTIONS program regulations 17.2

d. Technical assistance on how to disseminate OPTIONS program information 10.1

e. Technical assistance on how to implement the OPTIONS programs 5.9

f. No other assistance needed 48.2

g. Other, (PLEASE SPECIFY)________ 11.5

C-3. Have OPTIONS programs resulted in what you believe to be "significant changes" in your total district 1989-90 budget? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a. No real change in total budget 83.5 (1)

b. Significant increase 7.9 (2) ______ %

c. Significant decrease 9.5 (3) ______ %

C-4. Is the school board in your district initiating program changes in response to the OPTIONS programs?

a. No 82.4 (1)

b. Yes 17.6 (2) PLEASE DESCRIBE: ______

C-5. Has your district rejected applications of any students wishing to attend a school in your district?

a. No 91.8 (1) IF NO, SKIP TO C-7.

b. Yes 8.2 (2)

C-6. If yes, which of the following were factors in the rejection(s)? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Lack of available space 7.4

b. Restrictions due to desegregation plan 0.6

c. Lack of available personnel 1.5

d. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) 1.5

C-7. Have any schools or programs within your district been more heavily impacted by the OPTIONS programs than others, e.g., through enrollment fluctuations, staffing changes, or programmatic changes?

a. No 87.3 (1) IF NO, SKIP TO SECTION D.

b. Yes 12.7 (2) IF YES, PLEASE EXPLAIN

C-8. Please indicate the grade levels of the schools/programs more heavily impacted by changes resulting from the OPTIONS program. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Kindergarten - Grade 3 14.8

b. Grades 4 - Grades 6 8.3

c. Grades 7 - Grades 9 10.4

d. Grades 10 - Grades 12 18.3

e. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) 3.6

D. IMMEDIATE AND ANTICIPATED LONG-TERM IMPACT OF OPTIONS PROGRAMS

D-1. Based on the experience of your district SO FAR, what impacts have the OPTIONS programs had on the following educational factors? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH ROW)

	(1) Positive impact	(2) Negative impact	(3) No impact
a. School course offerings	20.5	6.7	72.8
b. Instructional innovation	16.8	2.7	80.5
c. Diversity of teaching styles	9.8	1.5	88.7
d. Student support services	17.4	5.2	77.4
e. Roles of school staff	16.2	5.2	78.4
f. School climate	19.6	11.4	69.0
g. Student/teacher ratio	10.7	11.0	78.2
h. Responsiveness of school board to the community	27.5	3.4	69.1
i. Parent participation	22.3	3.7	74.0
j. Community support for schools/involvement in educational policy making	20.3	4.0	75.8
k. Racial/ethnic balance	2.4	0.9	96.7
l. Student academic performance	8.9	2.1	89.0
m. Dropout rate	12.2	2.7	85.1
n. Return of former dropouts to school	13.2	0.6	86.2
o. School-level accountability	20.8	1.2	78.0
p. District/school planning	29.2	9.1	61.7
q. Financial resources available for education	14.0	21.7	64.3

D-2. IN THE LONG-RUN, in what ways do you predict that the OPTIONS programs will influence the schools in your district to undertake the following curricular and instructional reforms? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH ROW)

	(1) Will encourage	(2) Will discourage	(3) No impact
a. Development of new programs	46.2	6.4	47.4
b. Addition of new/advanced courses	46.3	7.0	46.7
c. Curriculum articulation and coordination around desired outcomes	37.6	3.0	59.4
d. Development of new/innovative instructional strategies	36.0	3.3	60.6
e. Improvement in support services for students	37.5	5.7	56.8
f. Increase in decision-making at the school level	28.4	4.9	60.7

D-3. IN THE LONG-RUN, in what ways do you believe the OPTIONS programs will influence the developments listed below in your district? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH ROW)

	(1) Will encourage	(2) Will discourage	(3) No impact
a. Increase in parent participation	39.2	5.2	55.6
b. Improvement in school climate	32.8	10.0	57.1
c. Assumption of new roles by educational personnel	37.9	3.6	58.5
d. Increase in school board responsiveness to the community	46.4	3.3	50.3
e. Improvement in student academic performance	23.9	6.4	69.7
f. Increase in racial/ethnic balance	7.1	2.5	90.5
g. Reduction in the number of dropouts	26.9	2.5	70.6

D-4. IN THE LONG-RUN, what changes do you expect as a result of the OPTIONS programs in any of the following institutional relationships: (CHECK ONE FOR EACH ROW)

	(1) Increased cooperation	(2) Increased competition	(3) No change
a. Among schools/programs within this district	18.7	6.9	74.4
b. Between districts	30.6	43.0	26.4
c. Between public and private schools/programs-	7.6	31.8	60.6
d. Between public elementary schools and early childhood education programs	36.0	3.3	60.6

D-5. IN THE LONG-RUN, what changes do you expect as a result of the OPTIONS programs in the relationships between your district and the following groups? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH ROW)

	(1) Increased cooperation	(2) Increased competition	(3) No change
a. Community organizations	24.5	1.2	74.3
b. Social service agencies	24.2	3.6	72.1
c. Local businesses	19.3	2.1	78.6

D-6. Based on your observations, how are the OPTIONS programs generally received by staff in your district?

Most staff in this district believe that the OPTIONS programs will: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Not make much difference	61.5
b. Generate community controversy	21.9
c. Create enthusiasm over possibilities in programming, staffing, working with other districts	16.0
d. Produce administrative overload	19.5
e. Improve the quality of education	18.3
f. Threaten the quality of education	24.3
g. Improve school finances and job security	18.0
h. Threaten school finances and job security	34.6
i. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	8.0

D-7. Based on your observations, how are the OPTIONS programs generally received by citizens in your district?

Most citizens in this district believe that the OPTIONS programs will: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a. Not make much difference	68.9
b. Generate community controversy	21.3
c. Create enthusiasm over possibilities in programming, staffing, working with other districts	13.6
d. Produce administrative overload	7.1
e. Improve the quality of education	16.3
f. Threaten the quality of education	18.9
g. Improve school finances and school staff	10.9
h. Threaten school finances and school staff	25.4
i. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	10.1

E. OPTIONAL

E-1. In your district's view, what are the major strengths of the OPTIONS programs?

E-2. In your district's view, what are the major weaknesses of the OPTIONS programs?

THANK YOU!

ID#: ____________________

FAMILY SURVEY

OPEN ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

You and your family have been selected to complete this survey which will help the Minnesota Department of Education learn about the experiences of parents (or guardians) and their children who participate in the Open Enrollment Program.

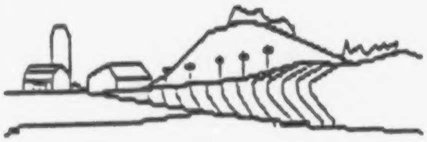
The Open Enrollment program allows students in grades Kindergarten through 12 to enroll in a school or a program located in a district other than the one in which the pupil lives.

This survey is part of a larger evaluation that also includes a survey of school districts. As a family participating in the first year of the program, your responses are important to insuring that we obtain an accurate picture of how the Open Enrollment Program affects students and their families. Your answers will be kept confidential and will not be reported in any way that can be identified with you or your child/children.

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to the Minnesota Department of Education in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible.

INSTRUCTIONS: You will note that each question has its own instruction, for example: CHECK ONLY ONE, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY. These instructions are always typed in CAPITAL LETTERS: Please follow them carefully.

Thank you!



The Minnesota Department of Education

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A-1. How many school-aged children (Kindergarten through grade 12) live in your home?

____

A-2. What is your relationship to these children? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Parent	99.1	(1)
b.	Other relative (aunt, cousin, grandparent)	0.4	(2)
c.	Legal guardian	0.2	(3)
d.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	0.3	(4)

A-3. Where do you live? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Urban area (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, Rochester, Moorhead)	11.7	(1)
b.	Suburban area (medium sized town/city other than those listed in "a." above)	34.2	(2)
c.	Rural area (small town, country, farm)	54.1	(3)

A-4. What is your ethnic background? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	White, non-Hispanic	96.7	(1)
b.	Black, non-Hispanic	0.5	(2)
c.	Hispanic	0.5	(3)
d.	Asian/Pacific Islander	0.7	(4)
e.	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.2	(5)
f.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	0.3	(6)

A-5. Are you currently using the Open Enrollment Program to have one or more of your children attend school in a district other than the one in which you live?

a. Yes 86.6 (1) IF YES, SKIP TO A-7

b. No 13.4 (2) IF NO, PLEASE ANSWER QUESTION A-6 AND RETURN THIS SURVEY IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

A-6. If NONE of the school-aged children in your home is now participating in the Open Enrollment Program, please indicate the reason(s) why you changed your mind. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	My child/children did not want to change schools	20.0
b.	Transportation is too expensive	9.2
c.	Transportation is too time consuming	13.3
d.	Decided my child/children is (are) too young	3.6
e.	Other schools were not significantly different from the school child/children attends	9.7
f.	Family circumstances changed	32.3
g.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	2.6

NOTE: If NONE of your children is currently participating in the Open Enrollment Program, please stop here and return this survey in the envelope provided. Thank you for your cooperation.

A-7. For the children in your home who participate in the Open Enrollment Program, please indicate the name of the district and school they are currently attending and their current grade.

	District	School	Grade
Child # 1:	____	____	____
Child # 2:	____	____	____
Child # 3:	____	____	____
Child # 4:	____	____	____
Child # 5:	____	____	____

A-8. Do any of your children in the Open Enrollment Program have a handicapping condition requiring an I.E.P. (Individual Education Plan)?

a.	Yes	6.3	(1)
b.	No	93.7	(2)

A-9. Did any of the children in your home who participate in the Open Enrollment Program attend a private or church affiliated school last year?

a.	Yes	10.5	(1)
b.	No	89.5	(2)

B. SOURCES OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE OPEN ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

B-1. From what sources did you obtain information about the Open Enrollment Program? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY, THEN GO BACK AND CIRCLE THE ONE MOST VALUABLE SOURCE

			(Most Important)
a.	A teacher	13.9	(2.6)
b.	A counselor	7.9	(2.0)
c.	A principal or other school administrator	47.9	(21.5)
d.	My child(ren)	13.9	(2.9)
e.	Other family member or relative	13.0	(2.7)
f.	Friend or neighbor	29.1	(6.0)
g.	Employer	5.2	(1.3)
h.	Social worker	0.6	(0.2)
i.	Brochure or flier	13.0	(1.4)
j.	School newsletter or school paper	20.7	(3.9)
k.	Radio, T.V., or newspaper	60.5	(21.8)
l.	Options hotline (toll free number)	0.9	(0.3)
m.	Informational meeting	7.5	(2.4)
n.	Social service or community agency	1.1	(0.2)
o.	Some other way (PLEASE SPECIFY)	11.5	(5.0)
p.	Don't remember	2.3	(0.2)

NOW PLEASE GO BACK AND CIRCLE THE ONE MOST VALUABLE SOURCE

B-2. Which of the following problems, if any, did you encounter in trying to get information on the Open Enrollment Program? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

a.	We (I) did not have any problems getting information	77.7
b.	It took a long time to receive the requested information	4.2
c.	The information received was hard to understand or confusing	3.7
d.	The information received was inadequate or inaccurate	3.4
e.	The application process was complicated	3.9
f.	The home school staff were not very helpful	19.3
g.	The new school staff were not very helpful	2.1
h.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	1.0

C. DECIDING ABOUT PARTICIPATING IN THE OPEN ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

C-1. Who first had the idea that you should apply for a school transfer under the Open Enrollment Program? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Mother/father/guardians	78.2
b.	Your child/children	18.5
c.	School principal(s)	1.0
d.	Teacher(s)	0.2
e.	School counselor(s)	0.3
f.	Friends	1.8
g.	Other family members	0
h.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	0

C-2. Indicate which of the following possible topics related to participation in the Open Enrollment Program you discussed with your child/children? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Transportation to the new school	62.6
b.	Quality of education at home school	40.5
c.	Quality of education at new school	60.4
d.	Effects on social life	50.9
e.	Effects on participation in extracurricular activities	44.7
f.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	13.2
g.	None, my child is too young to help decide	18.1

C-3. What were the reasons that you (and your child/children) chose to change schools/districts under the Open Enrollment Program? CHECK ALL THAT APPLY, THEN GO BACK AND CIRCLE ONE MOST IMPORTANT REASON

			Most Important
a.	The location of the new school is closer to our home	33.1	(9.3)
b.	The location of the new school is closer to my (my spouse's) job	27.0	(5.9)
c.	Our child's/children's friends attend the new school	31.7	(2.1)
d.	The educational services offered at the new school are more appropriate for my child/children	51.7	(8.7)
e.	The new school has a strong academic reputation (high test scores, good teachers, high college placement rate)	45.8	(11.3)
f.	The new school offers more course variety	35.0	(4.6)
g.	The new school offers extended day programs (before/after school care) or is more convenient to private child care provider	13.8	(4.0)
h.	The new school has more opportunities for parent participation	13.6	(0.3)
i.	The new school has fewer graduation requirements	0.5	
j.	The new school offers my child/children better athletic and extracurricular opportunities	24.9	(1.2)
k.	We were unhappy with the school board in the old school district	26.2	(4.0)
l.	The new school offers my child/children a fresh start	15.5	(2.2)
m.	The new school might encourage my child/children to stay in school	9.6	(0.9)
n.	The new school has a very positive climate for learning	54.8	(8.4)
o.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6.7	

C-4. Who was involved in your decision to apply for a school transfer under the Open Enrollment Program? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Mother/father/guardians	89.0
b.	Your child/children	58.5
c.	School principal(s)	18.2
d.	Teacher(s)	6.1
e.	School counselor(s)	6.3
f.	Friends	12.9
g.	Other family members	10.9
h.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)	6.4

____

C-5. What was the level of agreement between you and your child regarding his/her application to change schools? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	We (I) decided because child is too young to participate in decision	28.4	(1)
b.	We all agreed that a change of schools would be best	54.3	(2)
c.	Child was neutral, but we (I) felt that a change would be best	5.9	(3)
d.	Child was against change, but we (I) felt that it would be best	2.5	(4)
e.	As parents, we were (I was) neutral, but child strongly wanted to change schools	8.1	(5)
f.	As parents, we were (I was) against the change, but child wanted to change schools	0.8	(6)

C-6. How helpful was your home district/school in assisting you as you decided whether or not to enroll your child/children in a different school? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	I did not seek guidance from the district/school	62.7	(1)
b.	Very helpful	13.9	(2)
c.	Somewhat helpful	6.7	(3)
d.	Not very helpful	16.7	(4)

C-7. What kinds of information/services were available and helpful to you in making your decision about your child's/children's participation in the Open Enrollment program? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	School profiles/brochures	37.9
b.	Parent meetings	14.1
c.	Family conferences with school counselors	16.4
d.	Visits to schools under consideration	48.5
e.	Opportunities to talk with teachers	24.7
f.	Multilingual services	1.0
g.	Other, PLEASE SPECIFY ____________	30.1

C-8. What additional information, support, and services would have been helpful in making decisions about your child's/children's participation in the Open Enrollment program?

C-9. Did you feel that anyone from your home district/school was pressuring you to keep your child/children in the district?

a. Yes 27.5 (1)

b. No 72.5 (2)

C-10 Did you feel you or your child/children were being recruited to change to a new district or school?

a. Yes 1.3 (1)

b. No 98.7 (2)

D. EXPECTATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM

D-1. Listed below are some ways that a student's behaviors or attitudes might change as a result of participation in the Open Enrollment Program. Based on your experiences so far, please indicate whether you have seen your child's/ children's behaviors IMPROVE, GET WORSE or STAY THE SAME as a result of changing schools. (CHECK ONE FOR EACH ITEM)

	(1) Has improved	(2) Has become worse	(3) Has stayed the same
a. School or class attendance	19.3	1.8	79.0
b. Amount of time spent studying	42.7	2.3	55.0
c. Academic performance	51.0	3.1	45.9
d. Motivation for learning	59.1	2.5	38.4
e. Confidence in own abilities	62.9	1.5	35.6
f. Sense of responsibility	50.2	2.0	47.9
g. Relationships with friends	52.1	4.0	43.9
h. Participation in athletics	36.8	4.7	58.5
i. Participation in extracurricular activities (other than athletics)	35.5	3.6	60.9
j. Amount of time spent with family	17.6	5.4	76.9
k. Satisfaction with teachers	56.7	2.6	40.7
l. Satisfaction with own learning	59.7	2.4	37.9
m. Higher educational aspirations	42.8	0.9	56.3
n. Higher career aspirations	37.1	0.7	62.2
o. Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)			
______________	______	______	XXXXXXXX
______________	______	______	XXXXXXXX

D-2. How active were you, as a parent, at your child's/children's former school? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Participated in the PTA	19.6
b.	Regularly volunteered time at the school	26.5
c.	Attended school events (for example, open house, plays, concerts, sports)	78.4
d.	Kept in frequent contact with my child's/ childrens' teachers	67.9
e.	Participated in district committees	8.0
f.	Participated in school committees	16.7
g.	Involved occasionally on an as-needed basis	38.5
h.	Not involved	17.3

D-3. So far, how active have you become at your child's/children's new school? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

a.	Participate in the PTA	14.7
b.	Regularly volunteer time at the school	19.5
c.	Attend school events (for example, open house, plays, concerts, athletics)	88.5
d.	Frequently contact my child's/ childrens' teachers	71.6
e.	Participate in district committees	5.6
f.	Participate in school committees	14.6
g.	Involved occasionally on an as-needed basis	44.5
h.	Not involved	6.2
i.	Transportation (distance) limits my involvement	16.2

E. FAMILY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

E-1. What is the highest level of education you (and your spouse) have completed? (CHECK ONE FOR EACH PERSON)

	Father/ Male Guardian	Mother/ Female Guardian
Less than high school	3.9 (1	1.1 (1)
High school	26.5 (2)	25.9 (2)
Some college	33.1 (3)	41.4 (3)
4 years of college	14.5 (4)	13.2 (4)
More than 4 years of college	21.9 (5)	18.3 (5)

E-2. Please indicate the range which reflects the total income of all members of your household. (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a. Below $10,000 3.0 (1)

b. $10,000 - $20,000 12.2 (2)

c. $20,000 - $30,000 20.1 (3)

d. $30,000 - $40,000 25.4 (4)

e. $40,000 - $50,000 20.0 (5)

f. $50,000 - $75,000 19.2 (6)

F. OPTIONAL

F-1. What do you think is the Open Enrollment Program's greatest strength?

____

____

____

F-2. What do you think is the Open Enrollment Program's greatest weakness?

____

____

____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

NOTE: The attached Student Survey is for completion by any child in your home who is in grade 7 or higher and attends a school outside your area under the Open Enrollment Program

We would appreciate your assistance in asking them to complete this portion of the survey. If you need more than one Student Survey, please call (612) 296-1261, or Toll Free 1-800-652-9747 and ask for Enrollment Options, and we will send you additional copies.

PLEASE RETURN YOUR SURVEY AND ANY COMPLETED BY YOUR CHILD/CHILDREN AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

THANK YOU!

ID#: ____________________

SECONDARY STUDENT SURVEY

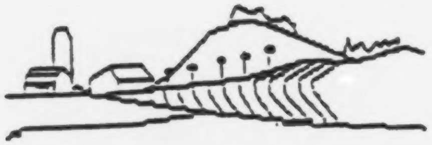
OPEN ENROLLMENT PROGRAM

This survey will ask you questions about yourself and about your experiences in the new district where you now attend school. Your careful and thoughtful answers to these questions will help those who plan educational programs like the one you are in.

Your answers will be kept confidential and will not be reported in any way that can be identified with you. When you have completed the survey, please include it with the survey your family filled out and mail them both to the Minnesota Department of Education in the enclosed envelope.

INSTRUCTIONS: You will note that each question has its own instruction, for example: CHECK ONLY ONE, CHECK ALL THAT APPLY. These instructions are always typed in CAPITAL LETTERS: please follow them carefully.

Thank you!



The Minnesota Department of Education

A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A-1. What is your date of birth: ________ / ________ / ________
month day year

A-2. What is your gender: a. male 49.2 (1) b. female 50.7 (2)

A-3. What is your race/ethnicity? (CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER)

a.	White, non-Hispanic	94.7	(1)
b.	Black, non-Hispanic	0.8	(2)
c.	Hispanic	0.4	(3)
d.	Asian/Pacific Islander	1.4	(4)
e.	American Indian/Alaskan Native	1.3	(5)
f.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)________	1.3	(6)

A-4. What is the last grade in school you have completed? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

6th or less	1.4	(1)	9th	20.4	(4)
7th	16.4	(2)	10th	20.4	(5)
8th	12.4	(3)	11th	19.1	(6)

Other (PLEASE SPECIFY)________ (7)

A-5. Before enrolling in your current school/program, which type of school did you attend? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Public school	84.6	(1)
b.	Private school (not church sponsored)	2.2	(2)
c.	Parochial or church sponsored school	12.7	(3)
d.	Did not attend school	0.5	(4)

B. REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING AND DECISION-MAKING

B-1. Who first had the idea that you might benefit from changing schools to attend a school outside your district? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Myself	29.9	(1)
b.	My parent(s)/guardian(s)	33.3	(2)
c.	Both my parents and myself	32.0	(3)
d.	The school	1.3	(4)
e.	My social worker	0.2	(5)
f.	My probation officer	0	(6)
g.	Other (WHO?)	3.4	(7)

B-2. Please indicate whether the following people at your old school mainly encouraged or discouraged you in the decision to change schools/programs? (CHECK ONLY ONE FOR EACH PERSON LISTED)

	(1) Encouraged	(2) Discouraged	(3) Neither	(4) Not involved
a. Parent or guardian	77.5	2.0	8.1	12.4
b. Teacher	10.6	14.6	21.6	53.2
c. Counselor	9.9	7.1	18.2	64.8
d. Principal	7.5	15.7	18.9	57.9
e. Friends	29.5	26.7	13.4	30.3
f. Other	4.0	2.6	2.9	90.4

(PLEASE SPECIFY) ____________________

B-3. Which of the following reasons were important to you in your decision to change schools? (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY, THEN GO BACK AND CIRCLE ONE MAIN REASON)

			Most Important
a.	To take courses not available in my school	45.8	(13.1)
b.	To help me stay in school	11.6	(1.8)
c.	To study a subject that is interesting to me	29.5	(1.5)
d.	To follow the advice of my school counselor or principal	2.5	(0)
e.	To get courses better matched to my abilities	43.0	(8.6)
f.	To leave a school I didn't like	45.8	(16.3)
g.	To help me decide whether or not to pursue more education	8.4	(0.2)
h.	To be able to work and go to school	6.2	(0.5)
i.	To get teachers who are really interested in me and how I'm doing	43.1	(7.9)
j.	To avoid being bored	22.0	(1.2)
k.	To follow friends who were changing schools	15.1	(2.9)
l.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) ______________________	35.2	(19.5)

B-4. Who made the **final** decision about your participation in the program? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	Myself	34.8	(1)
b.	My parent(s)/guardian(s)	21.7	(2)
c.	Both my parents and myself	39.2	(3)
d.	The school	2.0	(4)
e.	My social worker -	0.2	(5)
f.	My probation officer	0.2	(6)
g.	Other (WHO?)__________	2.0	(7)

B-5. The following statements refer to your school experiences before you changed schools/programs. (CHECK ONE RESPONSE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

		(1) Strongly agree	(2) Agree	(3) Disagree	(4) Strongly disagree
a.	I got along well with my teachers	27.7	57.6	10.6	4.1
b.	Discipline was fair in my school	13.5	51.7	24.0	10.8
c.	Students often disrupted class	20.0	36.7	38.3	5.0
d.	My teachers were interested in me	13.9	52.6	25.4	8.1
e.	When I worked hard on school work, my teachers praised my effort	13.1	48.9	33.9	4.1
f.	In class I often felt "picked on" by my teachers	4.0	13.6	55.4	27.0
g.	In school I often felt "picked-on" by other students	10.4	14.7	45.8	29.1
h.	Most of my teachers really listened to what I had to say	11.4	48.3	33.0	7.3
i.	I didn't feel safe at school	4.3	11.4	44.6	39.7
j.	Most classes were interesting and challenging	6.5	34.5	45.4	13.6
k.	Most classes repeated information I had already learned	9.2	32.5	53.7	4.5
l.	My counselors were helpful to me	8.1	36.4	36.0	19.4
m.	I received adequate help in choosing the courses I took	6.1	45.0	35.0	13.9

C. SATISFACTION/EXPECTATIONS

C-1. How satisfied were you with your old school/program, and how satisfied are you now with your new school/program? (CHECK ONLY ONE FOR EACH SCHOOL)

	Old school program	New school program	
Very satisfied	9.8	66.1	(1)
Satisfied	39.0	29.1	(2)
Dissatisfied	29.8	3.0	(3)
Very dissatisifed	20.0	0.9	(4)
No opinion yet	1.0	1.4	(5)

C-2. Since you started in your new school/program, how well are you doing with your school work? (CHECK ONLY ONE)

a.	I am doing better than I was in my old school	51.6	(1)
b.	I am doing about the same as I was in my old school	43.5	(2)
c.	I am doing worse than I was in my old school	4.9	(3)

C-3. The following are possible **benefits** that might result from your changing schools/program. Please indicate the ways in which your new school/program has made a difference for you. (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)

			Most Important
a.	I come to school more regularly	18.4	(0.9)
b.	I have more in common with other students	61.4	(5.0)
c.	I have fewer school problems	43.7	(2.8)
d.	I have fewer personal problems	32.9	(0.7)
e.	My teachers and counselors take more time with me and understand me better	60.1	(8.1)
f.	My classes are smaller	28.4	(3.5)
g.	I can proceed at my own level and pace	30.2	(2.4)
h.	Teachers make classes apply to real life	44.0	(1.7)
i.	I am learning more in my new program	62.4	(13.0)
j.	My basic reading and math skills have improved	41.1	(1.9)
k.	I feel better about myself and my abilities	64.3	(10.6)
l.	I am more sure I will finish high school	36.6	(1.6)
m.	I feel I will be better trained for a job	43.2	(3.6)
n.	I get along better with my family	23.1	(0.3)
o.	I am being treated as a capable and worthwhile person	54.2	(3.3)
p.	I have more friends	67.4	(6.6)
q.	I am taking responsibility for my own schooling	46.3	(2.1)
r.	Other (PLEASE SPECIFY) ____________	7.4	(3.3)

NOW PLEASE GO BACK AND CIRCLE ONE MAIN REASON.

C-4. Some students have had problems changing schools or programs. For each possible problem stated below, please indicate whether it is a major problem, a minor problem, or not a problem for you. (CHECK ONLY ONE FOR EACH STATEMENT)

		(1) A major problem	(2) A minor problem	(3) Not a problem
a.	Transportation to my new school/program is difficult	15.9	33.5	50.6
b.	People at my former school made it hard for me to participate in this program	8.2	20.1	71.7
c.	Getting child care is hard	0.2	0.4	99.4
d.	I don't feel prepared to handle the assigned course work in this program	1.4	8.9	89.7
e.	Classes are held at inconvenient times	0.5	3.4	96.1
f.	It is hard to participate in after school activities	5.8	19.1	75.1
g.	It is hard to make new friends in this program	1.6	86.8	8.3
h.	Teachers aren't very helpful	1.4	7.1	91.5
i.	Other problems (PLEASE SPECIFY)			
	______________	1.7	1.4	XXXXXXX
	______________			XXXXXXX

C-5. How could your new school/program be improved?

C-6. Which of the following best describes your expectations for the future before changing schools/programs and now? (CHECK ONLY ONE ANSWER IN EACH COLUMN)

		Before I thought I would:	Now I plan to:	
a.	Graduate from high school and enroll in college	45.7	54.3	(1)
b.	Graduate from high school and enter a vocational/technical training program	2.8	8.2	(2)
c.	Graduate from high school and enter the military service	3.1	1.7	(3)
d.	Graduate from high school and find a good job	4.8	2.8	(4)
e.	Graduate from high school and be a full-time parent/homemaker	0.3	0.2	(5)
f.	Drop out of high school and complete my GED	0.8	0.2	(6)
g.	Drop out of high school and find a good job	1.2	0	(7)
h.	Drop out of high school and try to find whatever work is available	0.8	0	(8)
i.	Uncertain	5.9	2.6	(9)
	Missing or multiple response	25.3	30.1	

C-7. Would you prefer to be back at your old school?

a. Yes 7.1 (1)

b. No 92.9 (2)

(PLEASE EXPLAIN) ______________________________

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

PLEASE ADD IT TO THE SURVEY YOUR FAMILY COMPLETED SO THEY CAN BOTH BE RETURNED TO THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.